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THE TORCH

THE TORCH

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THE TORCH

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BY

HERBERT M. HOPKINS

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PRESS OF
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TO

GEORGE WILLIAMSON SMITH, D. D., LL. D.

PRESIDENT OF

TRINITY COLLEGE

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

AS A SLIGHT TOKEN

OF AFFECTION

AND ESTEEM

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THE TORCH

THE TORCH

CHAPTER I

ENTER, THE HERO

Mrs. Van Sant put down her novel and looked out of the window, resolving for the twentieth time to abandon all pretense of following the multitudinous trails of modern fiction. She found life itself much more absorbing than any attempt to portray it. As she watched her gardener pushing the mower back and forth across the lawn her active mind seized upon even that simple operation as a thing of passing interest. There was something in the work that appealed to her practical nature; it was fresh, vigorous and clean, and showed immediate results.

She threw open the window to warn the man that he was cutting too near her flower beds and paused to see that the warning was heeded. The rising breeze of the late September afternoon blew her fine, reddish hair about her face and brought the quick color to her fair skin. For some time she stood, breathing deep with a sense of infinite refreshment, her restless eyes searching the shadowed

spaces of the quiet street and the front yards of her neighbors opposite. The only sounds she heard were the monotonous whir of the lawn-mower and the shrill treble of the locusts in the trees. All Argos seemed asleep.

Presently she saw Professor Plow coming down the street with his long, swinging stride, and drew back behind the curtains. She dreaded a call that might result in another proposal for her hand. Even her present dullness was preferable to another argument with him on that subject, and she breathed a sigh of relief when she saw that his quick glance failed to detect her presence behind the swaying curtains.

She wondered, as often before, how a man with such a fine head and such an athletic frame could remain indifferent to the little touches that would make him an attractive, even a remarkable, figure. He was the most interesting personality she had met in the university town. She felt that a man of his force and personal magnetism ought to have risen higher than a college professorship, and ascribed his lack of worldly success to a lack of worldly sense.

As she watched him striding down the street she saw her stepson coming in the opposite direction with the short, quick step and erect bearing that always reminded her of his father. The boy gave his professor a prim, military salute as they passed.

Mrs. Van Sant smiled, but without tenderness, at the memory of the tall and courteous soldier, so much her senior, who had won everything from her

except her love. She hoped, when she married him, that she could give her love in time, but she discovered later that it was too great a gift to bestow on one who had no room to receive it. Her nature was generous, but egotistic. She was one who must be sure of great devotion to herself before she could give. Perhaps the colonel had loved his first wife, but, as far as she was concerned, his mind seemed too full of ideas of duty, of honor, of dress, to admit a serious rival. His punctilious gallantry began to pall upon her; she felt that it had no more value than his salute to his general. Now he was gone, having left her a fortune and the care of his son.

The boy had inherited his mother's tendency to consumption, and Mrs. Van Sant decided to take him to the lofty prairies where she had spent her girlhood. In that bracing air she felt he would be safe. During the ten or twelve years of her absence the State University had grown apace, and she was glad to have Robert enter as a student. At first she hoped he might catch some of the largeness and enthusiasm of the West, but already she was beginning to see that it was impossible. He was ridiculously like his father. The small cup could not hold the contents of a pail. The only thing in the university that appealed to him was the military drill. She found it difficult to take an interest in his meager nature, but a sense of duty kept her to her post. Lately she had become interested in the social life of the place. The State University was much more important than in the days of her girlhood when she

used to drive over from the capital to attend the students' dances. Now it was not the students, but the faculty, whom she found interesting, and already her hands were on the reins of social leadership.

Robert came into the room and put his books carefully on the table. Mrs. Van Sant thought that a real, live freshman would have thrown them into a corner, but she could scarcely advise him to be boisterous and disorderly. She was glad to note that he looked fresh and well, though she had too much experience to assume that high color is necessarily an index of good health. They surveyed each other coolly, but without animosity or restraint.

"The new president is coming to-night," he announced.

"I'm glad to hear it," she answered. "His arrival has been heralded so often that I really began to suspect he was a myth. What kind of man is he? Have you heard anything interesting about him?"

He repeated some gossip picked up on the campus, but told her nothing she had not already read in the papers. A categorical account of his degrees and books left him still a very nebulous person. She knew that he was a bachelor and thirty-seven years of age, but there were many bachelors of that age, and these facts in themselves were no guaranty that she would find him interesting.

"I must take my ride," Robert said presently, anxious to be off. He hesitated at the door and then turned. "Shall I have your horse brought

around?" he asked. "Would you like to go with me?"

"Thank you, Robert," she answered. "I don't feel ambitious enough to change my dress, and I won't keep you waiting." She smiled brightly at his look of relief as he left the room.

"I bore him as much as he bores me," she admitted. "Poor Robert! He's always so polite, and as dry as ashes."

Fifteen minutes later she saw him canter slowly away on his horse. Even the well-groomed animal seemed to share the rider's personality and to step with a certain mincing propriety. A sudden eagerness for motion and fresh air came over her. She flung on her wraps and hurried from the house, drawing on her gloves as she walked toward the gate.

When once in the street she felt in better humor. She walked rapidly and soon reached the great, sloping campus of the university. As she glanced up at the long row of dingy buildings that crowned the hill she smiled with vague apology. At the moment the institution looked like some forlorn asylum. There was no individuality in the brown, weather-beaten buildings. One object, however, incongruously beautiful, broke the level sky-line of the roofs. The tower of the library sprang up against the blue, and even as she looked the chimes shook down a shower of sixteen sweet notes, followed by five brazen beats of the great bell. The chimes had been given by the parents of a student who had died in his

second year, that they might ring out his memory in the place he had loved.

"If anything happens to Robert," she reflected wickedly, "I'll endow a chair of Pedantry and Propriety in his memory."

The autumn sun, dropping lower, suddenly smote fire from the windows of the tower until, to her swiftly changing mood, it symbolized the torch of learning uplifted in those western prairies. She paused to watch the lower windows catch the glow, and soon all the buildings seemed aflame. Thin streams of students began to pour from the doors of the recitation halls, as if escaping from a conflagration within. The women, for the most part, went homeward, book-laden and serious, but the men rushed off to the football field to watch the practice of the team. She heard their jokes and laughter, and saw the dim, grimy figures of the players that swayed and pushed in the lengthening shadows below the hill. Through the still evening the hoarse commands of the coach came to her ears, and even the grinding thud of the canvas-clad young giants. The 'varsity was rushing the scrub team down the field. In another moment there would be a touchdown, and the belated students broke into a run, eager to join in the cheering of the watchful throng that filled the benches.

In the moving picture of life before her Mrs. Van Sant caught sight of her friend, Nicholas Lee, the professor of English literature, coming down the path with a companion.

Susanne Van Sant and Nicholas Lee had known each other almost from infancy. They were brought up in neighboring houses in the capital, and continued their acquaintance through the high school. The young girl, with her wonderful braid of auburn hair, practised her coquetry on the slim, angular youth, and was the torment of his life up to the time she went east and left him a freshman in the State University. The change she discovered in him at their meeting again had not yet lost its novelty. That nose, which seemed so preposterously salient in the days of his hobbledehoy, now suggested ancestors, and the tongue she once thought so rude had become the ready servant of a discerning mind. His enemies said that he had been pitchforked into a full professorship at the age of thirty-two because of his social connections and the favor of a prominent regent. Between him and Mrs. Van Sant there existed a freemasonry, based on a humorous memory of their early love.

As the two men drew nearer she recognized Doctor Trumbull, an assistant professor of Greek, a tall, foreign-looking young man, dark-skinned, with black mustachios and an imperial that had won him the sobriquet of "the count." Her acquaintance with Trumbull was so slight that she would have passed them with a mere nod of recognition, but Lee was in high spirits and would not be denied.

"I know you're going down to see the new president come in," he cried. "You might take us under your protection."

"I have no such intention," she retorted. "I'm merely out for a walk, but I see no objection if you wish to accompany me."

"I'm suffering from an infectious fever," Lee said whimsically, as the three went on together, "a fever of expectancy. Do you catch the excited atmosphere of this campus?" He pointed with his cane to the amphitheater of wooden benches at the bottom of the hill. "The authorities have taken long chances with the weather in planning an open-air inaugural, but no building of our future great university can hold the crowd."

They continued their way through the campus and along the brow of the hill on which the university buildings stood. Mrs. Van Sant walked between them, a spray of goldenrod in her hand, her naturally fine color heightened by the cool air of the September evening. Lee's glance paid her a personal tribute of admiration, for he appreciated every detail of her attractive figure, slender, clean-stepping and neat. She seemed to drop ten of her thirty years during her climb up the hill.

The path led upward until they stood on a level with the library tower. Here they paused by common consent to look down on the scene. They saw the sloping grounds of the university crossed by straight long paths of yellow gravel. The pine boards of the amphitheater appeared a dim patch against the darkening earth. The football field had shrunk to the size of a small corral. The practice of the team was over, and the crowd of spectators began to pour from the gates and trek homeward

like ants across the campus. The great sweep of lowlands beyond was bare, wind-swept, filled with strange lights and shadows, a scene to awaken in the memory odds and ends of sad verses. The little town of Argos was like a dark green checkerboard, pricked out against the prairie by the first white twinkling of electric lights. Far off they saw the yellow gleam of the great river. A steamboat turned the bend, crossed a strip of bright water, and was gone. On its banks crouched the capital of the state, the purple smoke of its chimneys mingling with the clouds that closed in upon the setting sun. The gilded dome of the State House, rising ghost-like, seemed to float above the thousands of roofs, suspended in the murky air.

"How melancholy and lonely our little Argos seems now!" Mrs. Van Sant said. "Perhaps I am lacking in soul, but a sunset in the country always depresses me."

"It's half-past five now," Trumbull put in, with a brusqueness of manner that she already recognized as characteristic. "If we're going to meet the train we must be moving."

"I see you have no sympathy with my sunset musings," she murmured, smiling. As she noted his indifference she wondered that Lee should find him congenial.

"Argos may seem small and lonely from this distance," Lee remarked as they began to descend the hill, "but it will soon be a very interesting place to live in. Everybody will fall over everybody else in his desire to pay his respects to the new potentate.

No more running to the regents. Babington is to have all the power; he's to be It. We're to be run on 'business principles,' I hear." He flung back his head and laughed scornfully. "It will be worth the price of admission to see Fyffe and Plow in the race for favor. It was owing to Plow's skill as a wire-puller that Babington was called. Plow told me yesterday how he and 'Bab' were classmates in college, how they formed the battery of the nine, and how he broke his finger taking a hot ball off the bat. He'll play Pylades to the president's Orestes."

"Don't you believe it," Trumbull protested. "If Plow worked for Babington it was because he thought him a good man."

"Please, Mr. Trumbull," Mrs. Van Sant interposed, "let Mr. Lee have his little gossip; he enjoys it. Anyhow, one may have mixed motives. Perhaps the truth lies betwixt and between."

Lee turned upon her with his charming and cynical smile.

"I could even tell you more did I not know your rooted aversion to personalities," he suggested.

"I'll relent in this case," she returned, "since the personalities are not about myself; and I know you're not unwilling to tell. I will even confess that I asked Mr. Plow a question or two. He told me the new president was an authority on the Eastern question, and offered to lend me one of his books. But I suppose a man like Mr. Plow never knows how another man looks."

"Naturally," said Lee, "since he never takes thought for his own appearance. But to go back to

my story. Plow told me that Babington was the son of a missionary in China. That's how he comes to know so much about the Eastern question. Plow's father was a blacksmith, you know."

"I didn't know," she answered. "That's interesting. But don't let me interrupt you."

"Well, they supported themselves in college by running a milk and butter business, and so the fellows called them the *buttery* of the nine, instead of the *battery*. Plow is perfectly devoted to him. He has even forgotten the iniquities of the trusts for the time being. He has been taking everybody into his confidence. He says Babington is one of the greatest men that ever lived, that he has managed to distinguish himself in the fifteen years since he left college, 'even in these days of great combinations that destroy competition and crush out individuality.' And our professor of political economy has shown himself a true Irishman. He pulled wires in a way to make a Tammany Hall politician green with envy. There isn't a regent he hasn't seen. In fact Babington owes him a debt of gratitude. Plow ought to have gone into politics. He could have been governor of the state by this time if he hadn't mistaken his calling."

Trumbull cut a weed low with an irritated swing of his cane.

"Babington may owe him a debt of gratitude," he declared, "but Plow isn't the kind of man to demand payment."

Lee glanced quickly at Mrs. Van Sant for her appreciation.

"I rack poor Trumbull's soul with my scandalous imaginings. Well, let us put Plow on the pedestal where be belongs. I waive the point. I will even go so far as to say that he or Everett might have made a very respectable president had there been that absence of jealousy in the faculty that ought to characterize a Christian community. But Fyffe is a horse of a different color. He will certainly enter the race for favor early. He will show the president his latest unpronounceable insect through the microscope. He thinks bugs are the most important things in the educational world, and he will know where to go to get an appropriation for his biological laboratory. Have you seen his polliwogs and goldfish swimming in a glass tank against the sunlight? It's a beautiful sight. But, to step from polliwogs to politics, our republic of letters will become a despotism, perhaps a benevolent despotism; it all depends on the character of the despot. He ought to be benevolent, for he will get a house and ten thousand a year, a good deal more than the governor of the state. He came high, but I suppose we had to have him, to put an end to the squabbles in the faculty and to make a showy head to the university. The regents will know where to place the responsibility now if anything goes wrong."

"I think the job is worth ten thousand a year," Trumbull declared.

"My dear fellow," Lee retorted delightedly, "you have never felt the pinch of poverty and you have no sense of money values. Ten cents or ten thousand

dollars, it's all one to your plutocratic eye. What about the poor devils of instructors toiling along on nine hundred or a thousand a year, less than the salary of any green graduate who teaches in a high school? That ten thousand looks big to them. As sure as I'm a prophet, there'll be trouble in the camp if the hand of the despot waxes heavy."

"I wish I could take part in it!" cried Mrs. Van Sant gaily.

"You can," Lee returned, looking at her with his significant smile. She ignored the suggestion she understood so well, and Trumbull had no idea of the little byplay—his friend's implication that she might marry him and thus become an integral part of the university life.

As they entered the street that led to the station they were absorbed into an ever increasing crowd converging toward the same destination.

"Here's where my inches come in," said Lee, putting on his glasses and looking over the heads of the people. The shops were alight, and the merchants stood in their doors to watch the crowd pass by. It was a homelike and comfortable vista. Mrs. Van Sant's spirits, oppressed by the solemnity of the open country, revived. She enjoyed all the life of the street: the whiff of fresh bread from the bakery, the sight of autumn vegetables piled high in front of the grocer's shop, the rows of books in the stationer's window.

"I feel as if I had been lost on a desert island," she remarked, gaily, "and had just come home to comfort and to civilization."

"Thank you," Lee returned. "I did flatter myself that you had been listening to some entertaining conversation. However, you deprived me of the prop of vanity years ago."

They stood in the midst of the expectant crowd as the train drew up at the station. The old president of the university and Professor Plow were in waiting with a carriage. In the light of the station lamps they saw the new president's tall figure, surmounted by a silk hat, step from the train. In a moment his old classmate was at his side with a shout of welcome. The two men shook hands.

"Hello there, Plow!" the newcomer cried.

The crowd caught sight of his pleasant face and heard his hearty laugh. They felt a glow of sympathy and pride. As the professor helped his friend into the carriage the students gave them a rousing cheer. They looked like sons of Anak, and the vehicle rocked with their weight. The crowd cheered again, giving the college yell, followed by the name of Babington. The new president doffed his hat and half arose, as if to make a speech. Apparently he thought better of it, for he resumed his seat beside his hosts, and the carriage was driven rapidly away.

During the next hour professors were called from the table to answer the telephone bell and learned that the new president had arrived. They in turn rang up their friends and commented on the news. The students were all agog with curiosity, excitement and emulous approval. From the fraternity tables to the great dining hall the word was sent

that athletics would now have a boom unprecedented in the history of the university.

Trumbull and Lee, equally interested, extricated Mrs. Van Sant from the meshes of the crowd, and accompanied her to her door.

CHAPTER II

WITH THE PROCESSION

The day of the inauguration dawned with a chilly wind that boded ill for the ceremonies. Soft, fluffy vapor began to trail across the sky, growing darker and more ominous as the hour drew near. About half-past nine the faculty assembled in front of the library and prepared to march to the theater at the foot of the hill. Their academic regalia made a brave show, for the various colors of the long silk hoods represented the chief universities of Germany and America and the gold tassel of the doctorate nodded on many a mortar-board. The lecturers from the departments of medicine and law in the capital were also present, as well as many of the regents.

A feeling of *esprit de corps,* a realization of their academic solidarity, pervaded the teachers of all departments. They chatted in groups; they made jocular comments on each other's finery; they were conscious of the amused pride of their wives, who waved them salutations as they passed by. In all that distinguished gathering there was scarcely one who was indifferent to the holiday spirit of the occasion.

Mrs. Van Sant and her friend Mrs. Everett lin-

gered a moment on their way down the hill and beckoned Professor Everett from the line.

"It took me an hour to get him ready," his wife declared. "Don't talk to me about the vanity of women."

"When I saw you at my table the other night," Mrs. Van Sant remarked, "I didn't know that I was entertaining an angel unawares; or shall I say a peacock?"

The professor beamed upon her genially, for he always enjoyed her banter.

"You must dine with us to-night," he rejoined, "and give us an opportunity to entertain an angel, not unawares."

"I'm not sure I shall let her," said Mrs. Everett. "Mr. Plow, have you come to capture the deserter? I'm afraid the fault is ours."

Plow took Everett by the arm.

"This is no time for talking," he said, "however great the temptation. The sirens will have to give place to-day to a Ulysses. Come on; the boys are waiting. I'm your superior officer, you know." He shook his baton threateningly and began to draw his friend away.

"Wait a moment!" Mrs. Van Sant cried. "I want to ask you who those gorgeous fellows are over there, those with the lilac velvet trimming."

"Those?" he echoed, with an expression indescribably humorous. "Why, they are the dental faculty. They make the rest of us look like thirty cents, and carry off all the honors with the women. I have no use for them."

"Nor I either," she replied, with a smile that proved her words true. "But where are your fine feathers?"

"I'm grand marshal of this whole outfit. You are to imagine me clothed in the invisible robes of authority," he explained.

The two women waved them a laughing adieu and went down the hill together.

"This is the great day of Mr. Plow's life," said Mrs. Van Sant. "It's lovely to see two men so devoted to each other as he and the president are."

Mrs. Everett felt that Plow might have supported her own husband's candidacy for the presidency, and was not so sure of his disinterestedness.

"To think of his refusing to wear a cap and gown on an occasion like this," she remarked, "especially when he is marshal of the procession! I understand, too, that Mr. Babington expressed a desire for uniformity in the matter; but one can take liberties with the wishes of an old friend."

Her companion did not fail to detect the bitterness of the innuendo.

"It's only an illustration of his democratic proclivities, I fancy," she rejoined. "He feels that a silk gown would not look well on the shoulders of a champion of the workingmen."

Mrs. Everett concealed her hurt with a smiling acquiescence. Her friend had sympathized with her hopes for her husband, but now, like the rest of the world, she was enlisted on the side of the successful man.

The band was already beginning to utter notes of

preparation, and Plow rushed up and down the line, shoving men into place.

"Close in there with Brown!" he shouted to Lee. "You don't object to the classics?"

The selection was scarcely a happy one, but Lee smiled amiably at the Latinist.

"I'm delighted," he remarked, "to march arm in arm with a lexicon."

He had known Marcus Brown in the graduate school of an eastern university, whither he had gone after taking his first degree at Argos. Although the two men were not friends, they had never quite abandoned the mutual banter of their student days. Fortune had flung them together again at Argos, and Lee had risen to a full professorship, while Brown remained still an instructor. The philologue regarded the English professor with a malevolent smile, though his shifty, light blue eyes could not meet steadily his rival's imperious gaze. It was characteristic of him to smile continuously and never to look any one in the face. His square head, his blond beard, his squat figure, reminded Lee of a kobold of the mountains. He wagged his head from side to side, groping in vain for a witty retort. Then he prepared a more deliberate thrust.

"The president made a speech to the students last night," he said, "and took them by storm."

"We'll take him by storm to-day," Lee rejoined, looking up at the hurrying clouds. "One good turn deserves another."

"I knew Babington years ago," Brown went on, "long before I knew you. He was one of my pro-

fessors when I was an undergraduate. He believes in sound scholarship. He'll trim off some of the old growth of the faculty, and some of the young shoots, too."

Lee saw the drift of his remarks, and his eyes twinkled with enjoyment. He knew that Brown regarded English literature as mere flubdub compared with classical philology, and sneered at the poems that sometimes appeared in the magazines over the name of Nicholas Lee. Evidently the instructor believed that the day of reckoning had come, and that he would be advanced to honor while the official scissors snipped his rival in the bud.

"Brown," he said solemnly, "this is the opportunity of your life. I advise you to sit up nights working overtime on that grammatical treatise of yours, and then dedicate it to the Gamaliel at whose feet you sat in your undergraduate days."

The band at the head of the column struck up a march and prevented reply. The long line began to move slowly down the hill. As they turned the corner of College Hall they saw the theater below them densely packed with people. The canopy over the platform, gay with looped flags, billowed in the wind. Tall standards, placed at intervals about the inclosure, streamed with bunting of green and gold, the university colors. Even the dingy buildings that looked down on the scene caught a reflected glory. Here some two thousand young men and women of the state sought the advantages of a higher education. Here many a youth dreamed of future usefulness to his country, or of renown in

the fields of learning, and the scene of such dreams was not without dignity to the eyes of the spiritually minded.

At last the procession had wound down the long graveled path, through the gate, and ascended the platform that inclosed the speaker's rostrum. The music rose into a final brazen and triumphant crash, and then a sudden silence fell on the thousands of upturned faces. A confused murmur of comment gradually became audible, like the droning of a hive of sleepy bees. The buzzing sound changed into a patter of hand-clapping as the chief regent came forward to the edge of the platform.

Judge Gates was one of the pioneers. His face, which looked like russet leather, bore a curious record of humor and avarice. He waited for silence, the suggestion of a satirical smile on his lips. It was rumored that he had not approved the choice of Babington, and many wondered whether he would show in his speech the impish spirit for which he was famed.

The judge's speech was short, as befitted his present rôle. He congratulated the university upon its new president, but before he closed he reminded Doctor Babington that a professor's position was like an easy armchair, whereas the president was seated in a rocker, exposed to every wind of criticism, and in danger of being precipitated to the floor. He hoped, he believed, that no such disaster would befall the present occupant. It was scarcely a felicitous jest, and the judge sat down, leaving the audience to make the best of it.

The governor of the state spoke next; a large, hirsute man who had hammered his way to the front without the aid of an education and despised universities. The present audience was only a small part of the public he wished to conciliate. He really represented the rustic population of the state, who regarded the university with suspicion and grudged the taxes that must go to its support. The coldness of his reception showed him that he was in the camp of his enemies. He spoke in a vague, amorphous manner of the necessity of education, and having done his duty as a politician he hastened to introduce the new president.

As Babington came forward the enthusiasm of the audience was boundless. The students cheered; the women clapped their hands and waved their handkerchiefs. The president's predecessor stood beside him to administer the oath of office. They formed a strong contrast, the one so bent and feeble, the other so young and strong, fit emblems of the old and new order of things. The president wore his academic gown as if it were an imperial robe, and held his tasseled cap in his hand while he bowed his acknowledgments to the applause. When the short ceremony of inauguration was over he replaced his cap on his head and faced the audience he meant to win.

This was the man whose fame had been heralded from afar, gathering volume as it rolled, and the people were prepared for a rare treat of oratory. His appearance justified their expectation; he was tall, square-shouldered, handsome. But when he

began to speak it became apparent that his voice was even more attractive than his personality. Before he had spoken many minutes it was evident to the more discerning that he had the happy faculty of clothing platitudes in a sumptuous raiment of rhetoric. A little lawyer in the audience whose voice was like a cracked flageolet whispered to his wife that such a larynx and such a pair of shoulders would be worth ten thousand a year to any man, and made the addition of brains superfluous. But the majority of those present had less reason to be perspicacious. Had the president confined his remarks to the state of the weather, they would have felt that some deep significance must underlie his statements.

Those who expected some discussion of university problems were disappointed. Whether the president had no convictions on modern educational questions, or whether he had determined to give offense to no one, was a matter of conjecture. The cause remained obscure, but the fact gradually dawned upon the thoughtful that not even the governor had been more politic and non-committal. But the thoughtful were in a minority. The great majority were held captive, as by music, and strained their ears to catch every syllable spoken by this prophet who had come to win honor in a country not his own.

The president spoke of the beauty of the university site and of the opportunity of growth within its grasp. He described the surrounding country as a land of corn and plenty. He seemed already to

make it his own, and the hospitable hearts of his hearers grew warm in response. As he limned the university of the future before their eyes they were stirred by his earnestness and sincerity. The picture appealed to their western love of bigness. They tingled with patriotism and felt that the university at Argos was in the forefront of the educational movement.

Plow fixed his eyes upon his old friend, like one entranced, forgetful of everything except the triumph he made his own. It was a great day for him also, and a vindication of his faith.

The last and longest part of the president's oration was devoted to ethical questions. There was a touch of the evangelical exhorter in the passion with which he insisted on high ideals, no less for the students and the faculty than for himself. The tension became almost painful, and the scene was one long to be remembered: the silent multitude, the fluttering, many-colored flags, the central figure that seemed to draw power and inspiration from the multitude and to give it back tenfold, the library tower on the hill, wreathed in rolling mists and sending down the wind its sweet reminders of the flight of time.

But all great occasions must have an end, and this one came to a close untimely. The speaker had scarcely sunk into his seat and the spell of his voice was still on them when the rain came, driving in a chilly blur across the autumn sky. Then there was a rush for the exits. People crouched under umbrellas and bent to the wind as they hurried home-

ward. Dignified professors took off their gowns, folded the hoods within, and fairly ran. In half an hour the great inclosure was deserted. The scene of so much enthusiasm was silent, save for the monotonous drip of the rain and the dreary flapping of the bunting that stained the tall standards with streaks of yellow and green.

That afternoon President Babington stood on the wide floor of the gymnasium and met the university individually. The crowd drifted by, now singly, now in groups. Staid professors and their wives, young instructors to whom he was a czar, enthusiastic students, all bade him welcome. The continuance of the storm took all brilliancy from the reception, but could not dampen the ardor, both real and feigned, of the university constituents.

A long line of carriages stood before the door, but these vehicles were the property of rich townspeople who had come to meet the president. The professors, with few exceptions, came afoot, and left their streaming umbrellas and muddy rubbers in the vestibule. The rain beat against the windows with a dismal persistence. During the pauses of the music in the gallery the monotonous patter became audible, and chilling drafts stirred the long streamers of bunting looped from the iron girders of the roof.

"It's enough to make a horse laugh," Lee remarked to Trumbull, as they stood aside.

"What's enough?" his friend demanded, with a suggestion of challenge in his tone.

"Fyffe, for example. He stands there as if fasci-

nated. He told me this morning that he had found a great man at last, one whom he could imitate. And look at Brown, ducking his head as if his neck were a hinge. He's telling his old teacher about that grammatical treatise."

"It's a good one, anyhow," Trumbull declared. "That man's a scholar."

"Of course he is," Lee assented. "He's one of the brightest jewels in our academic crown."

The president was chatting with the Everetts and Mrs. Van Sant.

"Are you one of the students, Miss Van Sant?" he asked in his kindly manner. She broke into a little ripple of laughter.

"Only by proxy. I sometimes pick up crumbs of wisdom from my son, who is a member of the freshman class."

"Your son!" He focused his round gray eyes upon her with astonishment that bordered on stupefaction. "I didn't quite hear," he managed to say at last. "This is certainly a wonderful climate. I shall expect to be taken for a freshman myself before the year is past."

There would be opportunity in the future, she reflected, for him to discover his mistake. At present she enjoyed his surprise too much to undeceive him.

"It is a wonderful climate," she assented, "in spite of present appearances." The Everetts had gone on, and they were alone for a moment. "Of course you will remember every one you meet to-day," she said, not unconscious of the inanity of the remark with

which she attempted to punctuate the silence that had suddenly fallen between them. "I understand that public men have remarkable memories."

"There's one I sha'n't forget," he declared with a touch of gallantry.

She greeted the sally with the impersonal smile of a woman experienced in compliments, and passed on to join the Everetts.

That evening, as she sat with her friends by their fireside, she bantered the professor as was her wont.

"You know very well," she cried, "that you faculty men daren't say a word, but I'm an outsider and can say what I please. I think Mr. Babington is as pompous as a peacock and as platitudinous as a parson."

"What a shabby return for that pretty compliment of his, Susanne!" Mrs. Everett interposed. "I saw he was quite taken with you; that's why I drew Tom away."

"Well, after all," the professor said genially, "a touch of pomposity isn't fatal; in fact, it appeals to the masses. And in regard to platitudes, when you reach my age you will discover that there is nothing new under the sun. Every public occasion like this calls for certain obvious remarks, and all we have a right to demand is that the speaker shall make them in an adequate and convincing manner. What we want is a man of popular qualities who will win the confidence of the people and bring them to the university. I thought Babington seemed a good, human sort of fellow, and I've no doubt that after he has made a few natural mistakes he will shake

down into his position and become a first-rate president."

Mrs. Everett regarded her husband with affectionate exasperation. She was thinking that this very charity had cost him the presidency. Mrs. Van Sant's laughing criticism did not conceal from her the fact that she had found Babington interesting and attractive. Here was one subject, at least, upon which there could be no real frankness between them.

At other firesides also that night the president was almost the sole topic of conversation, but faculty criticism was generally guarded and more than offset by saving clauses of commendation, for the power of the man loomed vaguely threatening.

Doctor Brown sat in his room alone and worked feverishly on the subjunctive mood. He intended to do the very thing that Lee had so sarcastically advised. When he laid aside his pen at midnight he was fiercely exalted. He took down his well-worn Bible and turned to a sanguinary passage from which his soul derived deep comfort. He was thrilled by the denunciations of the prophet against the enemies of Israel, as if they were a serried phalanx of his rivals.

High up in a building in the capital sat the local representative of the Associated Press. To-night he was proud of the story it was his privilege to communicate. He sent a long and circumstantial account of the inauguration over the wires, but the crop of casualties and crimes was unusually large,

and only the following lines on the event appeared the next day in the eastern papers.

"Argos, September 23.—To-day Professor Henry Babington was formally inaugurated president of the State University. The exercises were held in the open air, and the attendance was the largest in the history of the institution. The governor introduced the new president, who spoke eloquently upon university ideals. Rain interrupted the proceedings."

But in Argos the event was large in its various aspects. The students were hilarious; the social set that circled about the university was planning a series of entertainments; but to the majority of the faculty the day closed in weariness and feverish conjecture. There were few who were not conscious of the steady encroachments of those idle half-hours that professors love. Many were living on the reputations they would one day acquire when the books on which they were working so fitfully should see the light of day. There was a guilty consciousness of lectures reread year after year without revision, of the uncut leaves of technical journals on the library shelves. Excuses might seem adequate or not, according to the point of view: the exhausting strain of teaching large classes, the pressure of committee work and of social duties, the very weariness of bookish men at the thought of adding to the world's uncounted books. But it was rumored that the new president would exact a high standard of

achievement, and many a man turned restlessly on his pillow as he heard the steady autumn rain keeping pace with his thoughts.

CHAPTER III

THE PUBLIC PULSE

Shortly before nine o'clock the next morning the president entered the campus and walked toward his office. The wind had veered and was clearing the sky of clouds. Miniature ravines in the gravel walk showed the effect of the recent downpour, and the matting of dead leaves under the trees was noticeably thicker. The tart and bracing quality of the air sent the blood tingling to his finger-tips and stirred his mind with high resolves for the coming winter.

As Babington neared the center of the grounds the library chimes began to ring, the paths became thronged with students, the sun burst forth at last, and a belt of yellow light swept rapidly across the campus, touching the moving picture with sudden life and color.

Every one noticed the erect form of the new president. His expression was genial and serene, and his white felt hat seemed more cheerful and informal than the tall silk in which he had made his first appearance in Argos.

The greetings he received were as various as the natures that offered them. A woman student bowed

with shy admiration. Some of the men saluted in the military fashion they had learned; a few looked straight ahead without a sign of recognition, being either too indifferent or too proud to speak to one who did not know them personally. One group of girls passed by tittering. The president looked benignly on all, as if he welcomed an opportunity of speaking. The variety of greetings interested and amused him.

When he reached the door of his office he found a long line of students waiting for an interview. In his inaugural address he had invited them to come to him with their troubles and perplexities, and they had taken him at his word. The heartiness of the response was somewhat of a surprise, but he included them all in a smile of welcome as he passed in.

He closed the door and stood at one of the windows for a few moments, looking at the lines of hurrying students and professors. He heard in the building the ringing of electric bells that marked the beginning of recitations. The hallway outside echoed with the shuffling of feet and the murmur of voices. A typewriter in the next room clicked madly and intensified the impression of strenuous activity. His pulses quickened with excitement. The beginning of his new career, with all its dangers and opportunities, was at hand. A sudden depression and panic took possession of him, the panic of the pause before the fight.

The first student in the line was a woman. The

president was a close observer. He noticed the ill-hanging skirt, the unbecoming spectacles, and even the rough hand that rested nervously on the edge of the desk. This was not the kind of woman he liked, but he smiled on her genially.

"Good morning. And what can I do for you this morning?"

"I've been waiting," she began breathlessly; "good morning, Professor; that is, Mr. President. The girls wanted me to come and tell you that the Y. W. C. A. want to hold their meetings during the hour when Latin prose is given. Friday afternoons is the most convenient time for us."

Babington wrote a request to Doctor Brown and handed it to her.

"I hope that will make it all right," he said pleasantly.

She seized the paper and began her incoherent thanks.

"Nobody cares for the co-eds," she stammered. Babington turned to the next comer with an impersonal smile. The young woman, thus dismissed, stumbled backward, as if retiring from the presence of royalty, until she found herself, still dazed, in the hall.

The young man that came next had heard that the president worked his way through college, and he felt sure of his ground.

"Good morning, Mr. Babington," he said sonorously.

The president became companionable.

"You must tell me your name," he said, "and if I forget it tell me over again, the next time we meet."

"Jones," the other answered. "You won't forget that name, though you may hitch it to the wrong fellow. There's a lot of Joneses here, but I'm the Jones that wants the library job. The fellow who's got the job now gets twenty dollars a month. He's going to give it up next week; his father wants him at home. I can do the work all right, I guess. This is my junior year. I've done a lot of things to support myself off and on. Last year Billy Barnes and I ran an express wagon, but as soon as the fellows found that we had pinched a good thing they all started in and ruined the business for us. There's no money in it now. I'd like the library job first-rate. If I don't get something to do mighty quick I'll have to go home. I could get a scholarship at Washington University all right, but I don't want to go to that bum place after we've put it all over them in football." He grinned broadly.

It was impossible to resist the breezy quality of the man. The president threw back his head and laughed.

"All right, Mr. Jones," he said, "I'll make a note of it on this paper here, and if the position is open you can rely on my help. We can't afford to lose you to Washington."

"Thanks," the student replied. "I'll drop in on you again next week and see how the thing turns out."

The president's spirits were rising. He began to

hope that all the students were not forlorn, but the next man dashed his hope. He was a tall, thin fellow that leaned far over the desk and began to whisper a long tale about his efforts to obtain a loan of one hundred dollars from the committee in charge of the fund for deserving students. It appeared that all the money was exhausted. The student would be graduated at Christmas, and the lack of money was all that stood between him and his diploma.

Babington was a man of impulse. He did not stop to analyze the feeling that moved him to take out his check-book and write an order for the money then and there. Perhaps it was done in a frantic desire to remove from his ear that ghostly whisper and melancholy visage; perhaps he was moved by compassion; perhaps he was making a bid for popularity.

"Take your own time about the payment," he said kindly. "Now don't worry about it. Pay it back some time when you get ready. No, I don't want your note."

The young man's eyes grew moist, and Babington's distress was poignant until he finally took himself off to trumpet the deed through the campus.

The morning wore away, and still it seemed that the line would never end. Babington began to see that he had made a mistake, and resolved to protect himself in future by restricting the hours of interview. Some of the petitions were absurdly trivial and tried his nerves. Some were in regard to the athletic policy, demanding quick, sane judgment.

All sorts of personalities faced him and drained his vitality. At last a slim, rosy-cheeked youth stood before him, holding his cane and hat in his hand.

"My name is Van Sant," he said, "Robert Van Sant. I am president of the freshman class."

Robert had been elected to his office only the day before the inauguration. He did not know that presidents of freshman classes were often the jests of fortune, chosen almost by accident and destined to drop into obscurity as soon as abler men began to emerge from the mass.

The president's weary glance brightened. He looked at the boy curiously to see if he could detect any resemblance to the woman whose peculiar charm had arrested his attention the day before, but he could see none.

"I'm glad to meet a colleague," he remarked. "Presidents ought to have a fellow feeling for each other. I believe I had the pleasure of meeting your mother yesterday."

"My stepmother, sir," the youth corrected.

"Ah, I see," the president murmured. "And what can I do for you?"

"The sophs have been trying to get this cane away," said Van Sant, holding it up proudly, "but we were too many for them. What I want to know is this: Have we, or have we not, the ordinary privilege of American citizens to walk about quietly, minding our own business, without being subject to the attacks of a lot of roughs? Have we no means of redress, sir? We propose to resist to the

best of our ability, and we hope you will take cognizance of the fact that we are not the aggressors."

The boy's manner was that of a prig, but his words were manly. Like his father, he could fight, though it must be by rule and method.

"You're all right," Babington rejoined. "If any fellow tries to take away your cane, hit him over the head with it."

"Very well, sir," Robert replied, stiffening. "We thank you."

The president divined that his pleasantry had been mistaken for a command.

"Wait a minute," he cried. "I didn't mean you to take me literally. You'd better have an organized rush. Choose your champions on both sides and settle the question once for all. That's the way we used to do when I was in college. I can't allow fighting in the halls, or any interruption of the regular work. No violence, remember; just a good-natured trial of strength."

"Very well, sir," Van Sant repeated, saluting. "I understand."

It was nearing twelve o'clock when the president looked up to see Professor Everett standing before him, benignant, as was his wont, but weary with waiting. A light of nervous irritation was now in possession of Babington's eyes. He was hungry and tired, and he had scarcely time to eat his lunch before he must take the car for the capital, where he had an engagement to speak that afternoon.

"Well, sir," he said, laying his watch on the desk

before him, "I've got just about half an hour in which to eat my lunch before I must catch a train. Please state your business quickly."

The older man regarded him with surprise. He had been accustomed to a comfortable chat with the former president, while the students waited outside. Now he was not even asked to take a chair.

"I'm afraid this business can't be stated quickly," he said. "We've been working on it some ten years. It concerns the teaching of Greek and Latin in the schools of the state."

Babington rose to his feet, snapped his watch shut, and reached for his hat.

"You might submit your suggestions in writing," he remarked, "and I will look them over. I'm sorry I can't give you more of my time just now, but I'm sure you understand the pressing nature of my engagement. Good morning."

When Everett reached the sidewalk he met his colleague, George Robison Stuart, professor of European History. They fell into step and walked homeward together.

Stuart was a Scotchman, proud of his connection with the British Empire, proud of the fact that he had never become an American citizen, proud of his name, his red beard, his very ugliness. Babington's inaugural address had irritated him profoundly. He resented the president's extravagant praise of American methods in education, for he felt that no real university existed as yet on this side of the Atlantic.

"Did you see his lordship?" he asked. "What did he say about that matter?"

Everett's face was clouded; he resembled an owl stirred up in daylight.

"Perhaps I chose a bad time," he answered, "but even so it struck me that my dismissal was a little abrupt. He drew out his watch and ran to catch the train. It was a mistake to invite the students to come to see him. All that work is done by the proper committees. He is keeping the important business of the university waiting."

"While he feels the popular pulse," Stuart supplemented, smiling darkly. "My dear fellow, you've had a taste of what you may expect in future. It's his deliberate policy to stand in with the regents and students and let the faculty go hang. Kings have found it a dangerous business to appeal to the people over the heads of the senate, and history repeats itself. But I'll not join the bands of the prophets yet."

Notwithstanding Stuart's unfavorable opinion of the new president, he and his wife did not hesitate to invite him to dinner as soon as possible and to treat him with the courtesy due his office. Babington was in great demand, and it seemed to some that his duties were chiefly oratorical and convivial. Dinners and receptions followed one another in rapid succession; the rich townspeople vied with the well-to-do professors in showing him honor. He was claimed also by the state at large. One night he addressed a representative body of business men, another night he spoke to the Sons of the Prairies, or to the Association of the Alumni, or to a gathering of school teachers, and wherever the magic

quality of his voice was heard he left ardent admirers.

One afternoon, about half-past five o'clock, Doctor Brown spied a light behind the drawn curtains of the president's office. A month had passed since the inauguration and the instructor had not yet presumed to approach his old teacher. During office hours the crowd about the door discouraged him, and he knew that the president was usually away from home in the evening. He heard of the dinners and receptions, he read Babington's speeches in the papers, and realized how wide the gap had grown between him and his old professor.

His few minutes' conversation with the president at the first reception had not been satisfactory. Babington was quite impersonal, but the instructor comforted himself afterward by the reflection that the conditions were not favorable. For a month he had hoped for an opportunity of seeing the president alone, that he might tell him of his researches and pave the way to fuller recognition and promotion. Perhaps he might now have half an hour of friendly chat, undisturbed by other clamorers for attention. He determined to run the risk, and mounted the steps with palpitating heart.

For some moments he stood before the door, a prey to nervous indecision. Much study had weakened his vitality and courage. The sound of voices within almost deterred him, but he remembered that fortune favors the brave and finally summoned up sufficient resolution to knock. The murmur of voices ceased. Then the door was half opened and

the head of Watkins, the president's new private secretary, appeared, surrounded by a fragrant halo of tobacco smoke.

Brown had heard of the president's new doorkeeper, but had never met him face to face. He was a tall, slender fellow, spectacled, with amiable brown eyes and a never failing smile. His salary was twelve hundred dollars a year, two hundred more than Brown received, and the cynical said that he earned it. The townswomen were beginning to invite Watkins to dinner, that he might meet their daughters and bring some crumbs of gossip from the table of the great man. But Watkins bore his honors modestly and was smilingly non-committal.

"Who is it, please?" he queried, peering out into the dark hall.

"Doctor Brown," was the answer. "Is the president in?"

"Will you state your business, please? The president is very much engaged."

This was the secretary's usual question, and many of the professors had felt insulted by it. Stuart had refused to reply, and had pushed Watkins aside as if he were an impertinent office boy. But Brown was daunted and began to wish he had not come.

"Nothing very important," he stammered. Watkins hesitated. "Wait a moment," he said at last. "I'll see." And he closed the door.

There was nothing really offensive in the secretary's manner. He was neither brusque nor presumptuous, but smiled and nodded and spoke softly, as one who would gladly admit the visitor if he

could. He seemed like the guardian of a sick-chamber who appreciates the well-meant attentions of friends but must protect the patient at all hazards. In a short time he reappeared.

"The president is very much engaged and begs to be excused," he announced, in a manner both mysterious and sympathetic. "You might call during his office hours to-morrow."

"I beg his pardon," Brown said foolishly. "It was really of no importance. I'm sorry to have disturbed him."

He shambled off with a sickening depression of spirits against which hope could make no headway. As he looked back he saw the secretary emerge from the building and walk homeward with a step that seemed to his jaundiced eyes peculiarly jaunty, and he singled him out for enmity. The position of Babington so far hypnotized him that his resentment was deflected to the poor mouthpiece who did the great man's bidding.

Meanwhile, Babington was leaning back in his heavy oak chair, puffing slowly at his cigar with a certain zest and manner. Professor Fyffe sat on the other side of the table smoking a cigarette and stroking the silk-clad ankle that rested on his knee. In the corner, by the fireplace, sat Daniel Plow with his pipe, listening to the conversation of the other two.

The cigar, the cigarette, and the pipe, were characteristic of the smokers. Neither Babington nor Fyffe would have spoiled the shape of his coat by carrying a pipe and a bag of tobacco in his pocket.

There was nothing spruce in Plow's appearance, but his carelessness in dress could not conceal the splendid strength and proportion of his figure. His head was large and finely shaped, and he conveyed an impression of thoughtfulness and force which made his companions seem lighter men, by contrast, than they really were. His personality was rich and mellow, and there was something in the light of his hazel eyes so magnetic, so full of vitality, that few could be indifferent to their strange appeal.

During the month since the president's advent in Argos, Fyffe had been striding into his favor with seven-league boots. He was a gentleman, popular with the students as an interesting lecturer and the author of their college song, and he had produced a brilliant book. He was perhaps the wittiest after-dinner speaker in the state, an accomplishment that made him indispensable at the University Club in the capital and at student celebrations in Argos. There was only one thing that weakened his influence with the university world. Just as the professor of philosophy was often called an atheist by anxious mothers of students, so Fyffe was regarded by many as a drunkard. There was a sufficient basis of truth in the charge to weaken what might otherwise have been a remarkable character and to develop his cleverness and adaptability into anxious diplomacy.

Babington and Fyffe were gossiping about university affairs, and the former was quietly extracting information without seeming to do so. He had asked for the resignation of an old professor whose

days of usefulness were passed, but a storm of protest had caused him to withdraw his request. The old man met him on the campus and shook a trembling finger in his face while he poured forth his indignation. Word came from Judge Gates also that the president's action was "impracticable," and he hastened to make peace. Babington was discussing the incident when Brown knocked at the door.

"I had no personal feeling, of course," he remarked, "and it was my intention to give him the salary of an emeritus. There ought to be some limit of age at which a man should retire; then all friction and feeling would be avoided and the work of the university would not suffer."

"Of course," Fyffe assented, "but we're young yet. That will come in time. Old Dingley is very strong in the state. He knows the governor and grew up with some of the regents. I suppose no one has a larger personal following."

The president saw that he was not yet strong enough to root up the old growths of the place. He shook his shoulders impatiently and selected a letter from the pile on his desk.

"Here's something for you," he said, flicking it across the room to Plow. "Can you catch it?"

Plow stooped and picked it from the floor.

"You're no good any more," Babington remarked, laughing. "You never used to let anything get by you. It's a request for an address from a labor union in the capital. I haven't time for those fellows yet. Besides, it's more in your line. I'll write

a letter for you to the arch-mechanic by way of introduction."

"I'll go, of course, Babington," said Plow; "but the introduction is superfluous. Those fellows know the twang of my vocal cords as well as any congregation knows the voice of its own minister. They would be glad to see you."

The president winced at the "Babington" without the title. He felt that Plow was really inconsiderate and tactless. His position was hard enough without the additional embarrassment of the professor's familiarity. Lately he had tried to convey his feeling of the necessity of a change by addressing his old friend as 'professor,' or by omitting his name entirely. Plow did not take the hint as yet. Though vaguely conscious of something wrong, he still regarded Babington with the eyes of faith. Sometimes the president's embarrassment made him rude and cold. It was significant that he would not have thrown the letter to Fyffe in that off-hand manner.

"I'll write the letter nevertheless," he announced, somewhat sharply.

"All right," Plow assented. "It can't do any harm, and I guess they can stand me once more."

"Look at this," the president resumed, picking up a newspaper. "Professor Fyffe, who is this Father O'Toole?"

The large vein in the professor's red forehead grew prominent as it always did when he indulged in one of his silent laughs.

"He's a windbag who lives in the capital; a mighty clever fellow, too. He's very much given to lecturing, and edits a paper. Has he got after you already? He goes gunning for us in his editorials periodically."

"I should say so!" Babington exclaimed. "Listen to this: 'The Catholics have again had good cause to view with suspicion the Protestant politics of the State University. We have previously called attention to the fact that several ministers of Protestant denominations are members of the faculty of this institution, but the crowning injustice was committed in the choice of the Reverend Henry Babington for president. Last Sunday he preached in the local church of his own denomination. Imagine for a moment what a protest would be made if we demanded that a Catholic priest be given a place in the faculty at Argos! Yet the university is largely supported by Catholic taxes, and many of our young people are in attendance. It is time for us to carry the war into Africa and to found a Catholic society in the university on the same lines as the Protestant students' clubs now there.' "

He would have read farther, but Plow could contain himself no longer and burst into a hearty laugh.

"The Reverend Henry Babington!" he cried. "That's the best yet! Just because you spoke a few words to the Sunday-school! I knew you were a good fellow, but I didn't know you were as good as all that."

The president turned squarely to Professor Fyffe.

"What truth is there in the charge that we have some ministers on the faculty?" he demanded.

"Your predecessor had charge of a church before he became connected with the university," Fyffe answered, "and there are one or two other ex-ministers, though no one would ever suspect it if he were not told. But O'Toole chooses to call it 'Protestant proselyting.' He knows you're not a reverend as well as I do. I wouldn't give him a second thought. He's just playing to his own gallery."

The president went home, somewhat reassured by Fyffe's indifference to Catholic sentiment, but still irritated by the attack and more than ever out of patience with Plow. He picked up the evening edition of *The Times,* the leading paper in the capital, and snapped it open with a gesture that warned his sister to refrain from unnecessary conversation. The first thing that met his eyes was this heading: "How is He Going to Do It?" Then he read the following paragraph:

"President Babington, of the State University, is quoted upon good authority as having said that he proposes to put a stop to the text-book scandal which he alleges is now going on in the capital. He claims that the printing of school-books by the state is a cause of much corruption in politics, and that the children and taxpayers are the victims. This is an old charge and the burden of proof rests on the person making it. President Babington is to be commended for his enthusiasm, but he may find that every Don Quixote has his windmill. Let him produce his proofs and then proceed to the tilt. We

await developments of this sensational charge with unfeigned interest."

The president put down the paper and thought intently. He began to realize that behind all the applause of the multitude there lurked a spirit of free criticism which he felt to be impish and malicious. Judge Gates' comparison of his position with a rocking chair flashed into his mind. It was the judge that had interposed to prevent the retirement of Dingley, and suddenly he remembered that it was to the judge he had confided his intention in regard to the school-book scandal. Could it be possible that the man was a traitor to him? But other men were present at the time. He decided to give Gates the benefit of the doubt, but to use every effort to win his support.

At the table he showed his ill humor by pushing his letters to one side and eating in silence. He greeted his sister's overtures with scant courtesy, and finally began to open his letters as if each were a personal affront. He picked up a dainty note, and his brow cleared as he read it. Then he put it down and gazed at his sister with a speculative eye.

"You look tired, Carrie," he remarked kindly.

"I am tired, Henry," she answered in plaintive gratitude. "I was never so much on the go in my life as since we came here. I wish people wouldn't always invite me to their dinners and receptions just because I'm your sister. I suppose that's another invitation." She sighed wearily.

"From Mrs. Van Sant," he said, "to dinner. You remember we've met her several times; the widow

of an army officer. But you needn't go to this. She's not connected with the faculty, so there's nothing of official importance in the invitation. I'll tell her you were indisposed, if you like."

"If you think I'm tired enough to warrant it," she demurred anxiously.

"My dear Carrie," he returned, with an exasperated smile, "the word 'indisposed' doesn't specify whether the indisposition is physical or mental. Please give your conscience no trouble on that score."

She was grateful for his sophistry, and they dismissed the subject with mutual relief. She was glad to escape another social function, and he was not unwilling to be relieved of his sister's presence at the table of the one woman in Argos that had taken his fancy. Though he would not have admitted it, his sister's unworldliness cast a suspicion of newness on his own social accomplishments. She could never be elegant, in spite of the servants he provided and the gowns he made her wear. She worshiped her brother and asked only the privilege of superintending his domestic machinery.

Babington went up to his study, surprised at the buoyancy of his mood. He took out a manuscript on the Eastern question, which he was trying to finish for the magazine that had requested him to write it. This was his first evening alone since coming to Argos, and the silence of the house fell on him like a blessing. He felt that he would like to devote all his time to scholarly pursuits and to the perfecting of his literary style. He had long loved words

for their own sake, and he lingered over his sentences with the same careful attention that he devoted to the cut of his coat.

Mrs. Van Sant's note lay open on the desk, and he put the sheets of his manuscript on it with a humorous appreciation of its distracting influence upon his mind. It was nearly midnight when he dropped his pen, conscious of having accomplished something worth while. At that moment the anxieties of his position seemed unimportant.

Suddenly the shrill buzz of the telephone bell sounded through the house. He went into the hall and seized the ear-drum with a feeling that something unusual, perhaps some calamity, had happened.

"Who is it?" he asked. "What is it?"

"Is this President Babington?"

"Yes. What is it?"

"This is the office of *The Times*. We want to know what will be the amount of your subscription to the fund for the sufferers in India. We are making up a special page for Sunday."

In a twinkling the president saw his opportunity to win at least a perfunctory approval from this champion of suffering humanity, and his reply was given in a voice both cordial and sympathetic.

"Put me down for fifty dollars."

CHAPTER IV

THE PARTING OF THE WAYS

"I'm so sorry, Mr. Babington," said Mrs. Van Sant, "that your sister couldn't come. I feel that my little dinner is quite incomplete without her."

The president smiled at his hostess.

"Yes," he answered. "I'm sorry she was indisposed this evening. She's not very strong, and I think she needs a little rest. If she doesn't behave better I shall have to send her to Florida to recuperate."

For one moment the ambiguity of that playful word "behave" flashed upon him, but he saw no consciousness of it in any face and recovered his equipoise before he had lost it. He was in his happiest mood. The previous *Sunday Times* had placed his subscription to the sufferers in India at the head of the list, together with his portrait, and there was no further mention in the paper of the school-book scandal. He felt that fifty dollars was not too much to pay for the silence of that influential sheet.

"And there's Mr. Plow, too," she continued. "I had intended to place him next to Miss Babington, to see whether he could convert her to some of his pet hobbies."

"Miss Babington is to be congratulated and commiserated in the same breath," Lee interposed; "congratulated upon escaping a lecture on the iniquities of the trusts, and commiserated for missing the pleasure of one of your charming dinners."

The president looked across the table at the young professor with a gleam of amusement and appreciation in his eyes. He thanked his lucky star that this was the very night of the speech he had sent Plow to make in the capital, and hoped people would realize in time that he did not care to meet his old classmate at every turn.

"Professor Plow was good enough to take a speech off my hands," he explained.

"So he told me," Mrs. Van Sant returned, "but perhaps he may drop in later and give us an account of it. Mr. Everett, what do you think of his theories? I'm a dull scholar in such subjects, but I suppose you know all about them."

"Indeed, no," the professor answered, with his genial smile. "My range of interests is narrow. I try to heed the proverb that bids a shoemaker stick to his last."

"Why don't you ask me my opinion?" Lee demanded.

"Because you are prejudiced. That wasn't a very nice speech you made about Mr. Plow a moment ago, but as it was coupled with a compliment to me, I had to overlook it."

"I yield my part in the discussion to Mr. Lee," Professor Everett said. Mrs. Van Sant, looking at

him as he sat at the foot of the table, was reminded of some kind of beneficent fowl. His scant, rebellious gray hair, combined with the staring effect of his near-sighted eyes, suggested a wise old owl who has learned to judge kindly of his fellows and has discovered that there is nothing new under the sun. She divined his loyalty to his absent colleague and his wariness of fruitless discussions in which the element of personality might enter.

Lee accepted the permission gaily, and contrived to draw Everett into the argument, in spite of his evident reluctance.

As Mrs. Everett listened to the conversation, she thought Babington could never forget that he was president of the university. She felt that he tried to emphasize his position while talking with one who might have been in his place, and almost resented Mrs. Van Sant's kind intention in bringing the two together. She could not accept her husband's charitable excuses for the snub the president had given him on the first day of his incumbency. Babington, for his part, had forgotten the incident, and did not detect the coldness of the professor's courtesy. The conversation became general, and turned upon the president of the nation.

"To be perfectly frank," said Babington, "I'd be willing to trade with him any time. I don't believe he finds it as difficult to manage the senate as I do my board of regents."

"That's the way with me," Robert put in. "The fellows in the class give me any amount of trouble."

The president laughed heartily with the others.

"If any one offers you a college presidency," he said, "shoot him on the spot."

Mrs. Van Sant raised her glass and sipped a toast to her stepson's success as a class president. As she did so, Babington noted the gleam of her white arm and the lace that fell gracefully about her elbow. He felt that this was the kind of woman he might love, for she embodied all he most admired in women. He appreciated to the full also the luxury with which she was surrounded,—the quietly stepping maids, the softly-shaded candles, the delicate bouquet of the wines, the floral centerpiece, the antique plate. He encountered all these things with a dignified zest of enjoyment to which his hostess' presence added a subtile element of dawning romance.

Mrs. Van Sant, too, was enjoying her little experiment. She watched the president with growing interest, not unmixed with amusement. She thought him both handsome and wholesome in appearance, and analyzed the contrast presented by the weakness of his short nose and the strength of his fine chin. There was a fresh and youthful quality in his nature that appealed to her, and though she and Mrs. Everett telegraphed their mutual appreciation when he compared himself with the president of the United States, she felt that it was just this attitude of mind that would enable him to take the world by the throat and shake the huge monster into respectful attention.

When coffee was served in the drawing-room

Robert had quietly disappeared, to the regret of no one. Lee felt that Babington had received more than his share of Mrs. Van Sant's attention at the table and planted himself on a divan at her side.

"It is one of the disadvantages of being an old friend," he said, "that I must play the second fiddle."

She gave him a preoccupied smile as she handed a cup to the maid.

"Here, my dear, this is for Mr. Babington. Don't forget the cigarettes and cigars."

Lee, struck by the affectionate tone of her address, put on his glasses and regarded the maid curiously.

"A beautiful face and head," he murmured. "She would do for a picture of Psyche. You would never dare to have such a girl as that in the house if you had a husband."

"Not if you were playing the rôle," she retorted. "I can see that. But I'll tell you about her presently. It's an interesting case. She's one of the —"

The return of the subject of their conversation cut her short, but Lee mentally completed the explanation for himself. "One of the three graces," he thought, as she handed him a cup. She seemed not unconscious of the admiration in his eyes, and he thought he detected a certain confusion and resentment in her own. Mrs. Van Sant's hint and his own intuition told him that the girl was not a servant by profession, and though he had never seen her before, he suspected that she was a student

of the university. It was not an uncommon thing for girls to work their way through college. Sometimes, when he made a call, one of his own students opened the door, but he reflected that they did not seem to be of the class to which this girl belonged. Perhaps she was a candidate for one of the sororities, and this evening's service was a task of her novitiate. It was like the women students, he mused, to imitate the pranks of the men.

Mrs. Everett found herself next to the president, and they exchanged their first personal remarks to each other that evening. He was still in the best of spirits and puffed placidly at his cigar while he talked of a recent visit to England.

"I don't care much for Englishmen," he remarked. "They're insular and prejudiced. German scholarship and methods were first appreciated in America, but Oxford and Cambridge are five hundred years behind the times. They still swear by their Greek play bishops, they still write pretty Latin verses in the schools, and they think a man is a nobody who doesn't belong to the established Church."

Mrs. Everett was stirred instinctively to protest, not so much against the substance of his strictures as against his manner of uttering them. She had heard her husband make similar observations, but in a different spirit, in a spirit tempered by an appreciation of America's debt to English religious and scholastic culture. She noted that there was something personal in Babington's criticism, and

that he gave it as if it were a discovery of his own. He seemed to belong to that large class of Americans who have learned hostility to England in the public schools.

"Aren't you rather hard on them?" she suggested.

He stared at her with a gleam of dislike in his round, gray eyes. With Mrs. Van Sant he was charming and compliant, but he felt Mrs. Everett's hostility and returned it. Their conversation was becoming an argument, when he turned abruptly to her husband.

"How about that instructor you were trying to get for the Latin department?" he asked. "What's his name?"

"Doctor Eyres," Everett answered. "He took his degree last year with high credit and seems a strong man. He writes, however, that he can't support himself and his wife on nine hundred a year. I need him, for Brown is really overworked."

"I suppose Eyres' wife has no money either," Babington remarked irritably. "Why don't those young men marry girls with money? It would be a fair exchange for position. Look at Barnes. He hadn't a cent, but he married a rich woman, and she made him what he is to-day."

"After all," Mrs. Van Sant interposed, "I like the independence of our American men. The kind of marriage you suggest, Mr. Babington, might not always be conducive to happiness."

"Why not?" he demanded. "Why shouldn't a young man use common sense in choosing a wife?

It's a fair bargain on both sides. He gives her position, and she gives him the means to maintain it."

"I'm afraid your experience in affairs of the heart has been limited," she retorted, with a charming smile. "Even a woman that has money likes to think she is chosen for herself."

Lee looked from one to the other.

"There's no subject so interesting as that of matrimony," he remarked, "especially to the unmarried."

"And they are in the majority here," Mrs. Van Sant said.

The president apparently shared her appreciation of the situation, and joined in her laughter, but he glanced at Lee with sudden suspicion. He was not sure that he liked the young professor as well as he thought he did at the beginning of the dinner, and showed his change of feeling by ignoring him as he had previously ignored Mrs. Everett.

As soon as decency permitted, Lee uncoiled his long legs and rose to go. Mrs. Everett gave the signal to her husband, and the three took their leave together. When Lee left them at the corner of the street Mrs. Everett burst out in a manner that caused her husband some astonishment.

"I'm ashamed of Sue Van Sant, and as for that man, I positively hate him!"

Everett did not need to be told that the man in question was not the one that had just left them.

"It's a comfort to know that we're not called upon either to like or dislike him," he replied.

"But we can't help it," she persisted. "He has been just as nasty to both of us as he could possibly be."

"I thought he seemed much taken with Mrs. Van Sant," he suggested, anxious to change the drift of the conversation.

Mrs. Everett laughed.

"She is entertaining herself with him as she does with Lee and Plow. Did you ever hear anything more delicious than Lee's comment on that matrimonial discussion?"

"His gift for sarcastic comment will get him into trouble some day," he remarked.

"It has already, a hundred times; but he doesn't care. The more trouble he stirs up, the sweeter and more innocent his smile becomes. I could see that he was furious with Mrs. Van Sant to-night. But she'll never marry that man. She sees through him as well as I do. You can imagine how amused she was to hear him expatiate upon the 'position' of university instructors after her army experience. Wait a moment."

She stopped to gather her silk skirt over her arm, for the sidewalk was wet. As they went on she reflected bitterly that it was a long time since they had gone to an entertainment in a carriage, certainly not since the babies had come. She noted with a keen pang that her husband's evening coat could be seen below his overcoat. With an impulse of tenderness she suddenly drew him into the shadow of a tree and kissed him.

The president needed little urging to be induced to take a second cigar. He was alone with his hostess at last, and he reflected that it was the first time he had enjoyed the privilege. They were discussing a recent book of Irish ballads. He turned over the pages at random and read passages in his fine voice. It was an unexpected revelation of the man, and she listened with attentive interest. Presently a phrase struck a chord of memory in her mind, and she interrupted him with a little exclamation of discovery.

"Mr. Babington," she demanded, "did you ever write poetry?"

He flushed with pleasure.

"The sins of my youth," he rejoined. "You don't mean to tell me that one of them has come home to roost?"

"Indeed it has," she assented gaily. "If you'll wait a moment I'll bring it to you."

She left the room and ran upstairs. In a few minutes she returned, her eyes bright with amusement and excitement, her fine red hair somewhat disordered by her flight. Babington regarded her with an expression in which embarrassment and admiration were curiously blended.

"I hope it isn't one of my very earliest," he said.

She sank into a chair and began to turn the leaves of a little, red-bound book. It was a scrapbook of poetry, filled to the last page and stuffed with many loose clippings besides.

"This collection represents all stages of my appreciation," she remarked. "I suppose you would

have had the book carefully indexed, but I don't know where to find anything I want. Where is it? You mustn't despise my unscholarly ways. Here it is!"

She held up a clipping triumphantly and began to read. It was a poem on nature, and Babington felt that the verses were sentimental, in spite of the reader's charming rendering. When she had finished he took the clipping and examined it curiously.

"I see it is from a newspaper," he remarked. "It must have been copied from the magazine in which it originally appeared. I didn't know my muse had been so honored. I was very young when I wrote that. I haven't written a line of poetry for fifteen years."

"I've had it about that time," she rejoined, replacing it in the book. "Of course it's youthful, but I like the spirit of it. Why don't you write some poetry now?"

"Perhaps life has sobered me," he suggested.

"Then I would reverse the old saying and appeal from Philip sober to Philip drunk. Perhaps one ought to be ashamed of being ashamed of the intoxication of youthful fancy."

He unraveled the epigram slowly. She was making him talk about himself, not the newer self he had upbuilt with such care, but about the self whose native impulses he had come to regard as a weakness. To think that his forgotten and despised verses should be a passport to the regard of this woman!

"I used to think I should be a great poet some day," he said with amused frankness, "and even after I left college I cherished the delusion for a while. But I soon found out that this isn't an age of poetry. It wasn't the thing I was fitted for, after all, and I gave it up." He laughed genially. "Why, do you know, when you asked me whether I had written any poetry I was panic-stricken. I wondered which of my effusions you were going to face me with."

He paused and thoughtfully flicked the ashes of his cigar into the tray. In the silence the fire crackled comfortably in the grate and intensified his impression of seclusion and intimacy. He looked at her attentive and lovely face and obeyed the impulse that drove him on.

"When I was in college I used to sit alone in my room on winter nights, inspired by the sound of the wind in the trees, by a glimpse of the stars beyond my window, by a hundred little things I never notice now. This moment seems to bring it back to me. Philip is drunk again."

She had not known he could be so charming.

"We each live half a dozen different lives," she remarked. "Perhaps the best life is an harmonious combination of them all."

He shook his head, smiling at her earnestness, as a man will.

"This is an age of specialization. A jack of all trades finds himself left out in the cold."

The expression of his face arrested her reply. He had grown worldly again. "Out in the cold!"

The fear of the cold: that was the key to the mystery. It was for the warm place that he had come to despise his early dreams. The ringing of the bell forestalled her reply. A rush of cold air penetrated the drawing-room, and in another moment Professor Plow stood before them. He had not even stopped to take off his overcoat.

The personality of the man was aggressive. He brought an air of vigor and rough endeavor into the exquisite room. Mrs. Van Sant herself relieved him of his hat and coat and put them in the hall.

"It's trying to rain and snow at the same time," Plow exclaimed, turning his back to the fire, "with the chances in favor of the snow winning out at the finish. I've just come from a rousing good meeting." He stood erect, his eyes bright with enthusiasm.

"Tell us about it," Mrs. Van Sant begged. "I'm glad you didn't forget your promise to drop in on your way home. What did you say to them?"

She was dimly conscious of a certain unexpected restraint in the president's greeting of his friend, but she assigned a cause not unflattering to herself. She thought Plow seemed very much like a labor leader, as he stood there in his rough tweed suit. The steam that rose from his damp, rumpled garments was like the smoke of battle through which he had passed.

"Oh, much the same old story," he said. "I took for my subject The Coming Conflict. When I see those poor fellows I always think that I should

have been just like them if I hadn't had better opportunities. I tell you, some of those mechanics keep a man on the jump trying to answer their questions. They read, those fellows do. One old man wanted to know why it was that four thousand millionaires owned over twenty per cent. of the wealth of the country; why one family in each hundred could buy out the other ninety-nine and have something over."

"Did you tell him that it was due to brains?" Babington asked, with a curious smile. But Plow was in no humor for jests.

"No, sir," he cried, with a wide sweep of his arm, as if he were still before an audience, "I couldn't conscientiously give them any such answer. I told them that it was the paradox of the century to see the congestion of wealth in the hands of the privileged few, in spite of the wide diffusion of education among the masses. I told them no man's services were worth a salary of a million dollars a year. I told them we were paying tribute now to emperors of steel and kings of oil, instead of to the old-fashioned kind of kings. These are our robber barons."

The president's face had grown immovable and hard. Was this the man he had sent as his accredited representative?

"What solution did you recommend?" he asked coldly.

"Coöperation," said Plow, "union, the public ownership of public utilities. The wealth of the

country belongs to the people, and they have a right to claim their own, for they have created it."

He sank back into a chair, suddenly weary, and drank the glass of wine his hostess offered him.

"The university has a place in all this," he continued. "That's what I tell the young men in my classes. I want them to realize their opportunities and responsibilities. I want them to be on the right side when the line is drawn. That's why I love my profession. I feel that I can be a connecting link between the educated men and the masses. I'm glad I'm teaching in a state institution, an institution for the people, not created with conscience money to tickle the vanity of an individual. We can say what we please and extend a helping hand to the men who need it most. You remember we used to discuss these subjects in college, Babington. Things have grown worse since then."

"I should say rather better," the president answered distinctly. "I think the trusts are a benefit to the country."

Plow's eyes opened wide, and he stared at his old classmate with incredulity. Then he returned to the attack with renewed vigor, anxious only to win a convert, and unsuspicious of the complicated emotions that were raging in the other's heart.

Mrs. Van Sant had never greater need of her social experience. She put in a word here, a tactful suggestion there, and finally succeeded in turning the conversation to another channel. But the effort was exhausting, and she was greatly relieved when her guests went away together.

"If those two ever come to my house again at the same time," she reflected, as the door closed behind them, "I shall put them in different rooms. And I thought they were Jonathan and David!" Suddenly she was struck by something she had scarcely noticed when they were present—Babington's evident dislike of Plow, in spite of the latter's devotion to him. The president alone had made the argument bitter and personal.

The two men walked to the corner together. The hour was late, and no one saw them as they stood talking beneath the naked branches of the trees, their hats and shoulders whitened by the gently-falling flakes of the first snow.

"And one thing more," the president said. "I noticed you called me 'Babington' to-night. I wouldn't mind so far as I am concerned, you know, but we must be more careful, more formal. We don't want any talk about favoritism; you understand? That, and a little more caution in your public utterances. The conditions are unfortunate, but we must conform to them. Good night."

Plow did not seem to see the outstretched hand. His heart was hot within him. He was wrestling fiercely with one of the great emotional crises of his life. For a moment he seemed almost dazed by the blow from the man he had loved. Then, in a flash, vague doubts rushed back upon him as convictions, hard and fatal. He took a deep breath that was almost a sob, turned squarely about, and strode away without a word.

CHAPTER V

A HINT OF HIDDEN MILLIONS

As Babington entered Mrs. Van Sant's drawing-room Professor Plow rose to go. Each man gave the other a formal salutation, scrupulously courteous. Plow held his hostess in conversation a few moments longer and then went away, without another look at the president.

Mrs. Van Sant knew of the continuance of the estrangement whose beginning she had witnessed in that room about a month before. The whole university was talking about it, speculating as to the cause, the extent, and the probable result. From the principals in the affair she had not heard a word. The professor's reticence invested him with a new dignity and interest. She had scarcely expected him to show such self-control and breeding, but she discovered that he could be silent about his own wrongs, however eloquent he might become over the wrongs of a class. The situation had become intensely interesting to her, and a consciousness of her own unintentional part in the estrangement added an element of excitement to the drama.

This was the president's second call since the

dinner, and he had begun to take Mrs. Van Sant into his confidence. She was not indifferent to the compliment, and her growing knowledge of the university machinery gave her an exhilarating sense of participation. He knew instinctively that he would make but poor progress in her regard by showing an animus toward Plow. He appreciated the advantage of his position. He was the president, and the professor was a subordinate. He was not called upon to explain or defend his attitude. In the nature of things, this silence made an appeal to her imagination. She was prepared to defend the professor with the loyalty of a woman toward the man that is devoted to her, not unwilling to pique the man that had taken her fancy. But the opportunity was denied her, and both men had risen in her estimation in consequence.

This afternoon she thought the president unusually interesting. The university seemed a bigger thing than she had considered it thus far. As Babington indicated some of his plans for the future she lost the unacknowledged scorn of mere state enterprises which her residence at the capital of the nation had given her.

"I wish I could be president of something," she sighed; "something more vitally interesting than a woman's club. I'm sure I have great executive ability, for whenever I have nothing else to do I roll the furniture in this room about. I should like to be at the head of some big concern and put the men where I want them, just as I put these chairs." She made a pretty gesture with her hands,

as if she were arranging the pieces, and Babington's eyes brightened with amusement and admiration.

"The difficulty is that the men don't always stay put," he replied. It was on the tip of his tongue to mention Plow as an instance, but he stopped in time. She was curiously disappointed when he made the application general. "The greatest need is men who will remain 'put,' so to speak, great teachers and specialists who will attend to their work and let the executive execute. But great teachers cost a great deal of money. Even after the money is provided the teachers can not always be found. You'd be surprised to know how few scholars we have of the first rank. I wouldn't admit it to an Englishman, but it's true."

"Isn't it rather hard for a young man to improve his scholarship under present conditions?" she suggested. "I've heard so much talk about small salaries and large classes. Mrs. Everett and I surprised a young instructor with a broom in his hand the other day, when we went to call on his wife. There's another man I always meet wheeling a baby carriage. I don't suppose he gets much time for study. He always looks half asleep, like the dormouse in 'Alice in Wonderland.'"

Instead of laughing at the comparison, he drew himself up as if subtly offended by the stubborn facts she presented. His eyes seemed to grow round, with just the suggestion of a defiant stare, and his manner was touched with pomposity.

"They're lazy," he declared, "or unwise. 'Where

there's a will there's a way.' They give up their high ideals too easily, and are only too glad to excuse themselves by laying the blame on external conditions. My experience has taught me that the exceptional man can always solve the problem."

The clock on the mantel sent forth five slow, silvery notes, and she rose from her chair.

"This is my time for a cup of tea," she announced. "I wish I were half as regular in my prayers as in my potations. Won't you join me?"

While she busied herself in preparations he sat steeped in comfort and expectation. The December twilight was coming on, and through the half-drawn curtains he could see the street lamps dotting the deepening shadows. The cold winter sunset faded away in austere grandeur beyond the roofs and trees. Then he turned his gaze within and saw the blue flame of the alcohol lamp curling and lapping about the little brazen kettle, behind which she sat banked with cushions, smiling, radiant. Above her, on the wall, was a plaster representation of a Victory taking off her sandals. The pictures of the room were now indistinguishable, but their frames shone in dim streaks of gold. From a corner the pale head of the Hermes of Praxiteles looked down on the scene, like a beautiful ghost.

"I know where you can get some money for the university," she remarked presently, smiling at him over the edge of her lifted teacup. "Kate Tupper, of course."

"And who is this generous Kate Tupper?" he asked, suspecting a jest.

"Kate's worth millions, positively millions," she went on with relish, "and she hasn't a chick nor a child to give it to, nor even a near relative." Her enjoyment moved him to sympathetic laughter.

"You must describe her to me," he suggested. "You must explain the methods by which she is to be won to take my—or shall I say our—view of the case."

"But she can't be described. She must be seen to be believed. There now, I'm not going to gossip about Mrs. Tupper. Some day I'll arrange to have you meet her."

He was disappointed by the arrival of Lee and Trumbull. It seemed his fate to be interrupted whenever his conversation with Mrs. Van Sant became peculiarly interesting.

"Mr. Trumbull," she said, "may I make use of your inches to light the chandelier?"

"I brought him in," Lee explained, "to show you some of his Greek coins. I knew you'd be interested. He has been carrying them about in his pockets like a miser for months."

Trumbull turned from lighting the gas and scattered a handful of his treasures on the table.

"Here's one," he said, "stamped with the face of Hiero of Syracuse. It looks like a quarter at first sight, doesn't it? I gave it to a conductor the other day by mistake and had a great time getting it back." He went on to describe the incident, and the president was much amused.

"Doctor Trumbull," he said, "there's only one way I know of to keep those coins safe from the

fingers of designing street-car conductors. You must put them behind a glass case in the university museum."

"I will," the young man answered, "but I can't bring myself to do it yet. The sense of possession is too sweet."

"He has thousands of them," Lee volunteered. "He can spare us a few hundred just as well as not. You ought to see his rooms. I never go in there without a superstitious shiver, for the place reminds me of a cemetery. He has rows of Greek gravestones lined up against the walls. I've no doubt he sank to the lowest depths of bribery to get them away from their native land."

"I did," Trumbull admitted, with a flash of his white teeth. "Those degenerate mongrels are full of sentiment about the 'bones of their ancestors,' as they are pleased to call them." He took the cup of tea which his hostess handed him and set it down on the table untasted, while he continued to talk with the president. The subject was one that always aroused him to unwonted loquacity.

Babington had paid scant heed to Lee's remarks, and now confined his attention entirely to the archæologist. Mrs. Van Sant listened while they compared impressions of Greece, and reflected that Trumbull really did seem a foreign count, with his ruddy complexion, the black imperial on his nether lip, and the trilling pronunciation of his r's. Once she ventured a remark, but he glanced at her with a cold look of unconscious rudeness, and then continued the conversation with the person he found

most interesting. She was quick to divine the president's attitude toward Lee and Trumbull's indifference to herself.

"Mr. Lee," she said, "come over here and play that gavotte of Dreyschock for me. It won't disturb this learned conversation, I'm sure."

Lee seated himself at the grand piano at the farther end of the room. His long fingers played over the keys like a breath of wind on a harp. She stood beside him, listening intently. He never seemed as fine to her as when seated at the piano playing in his easy, nonchalant, inspired way, his head thrown back, the latent ideality of his nature breaking through his more usual mood of light cynicism.

The president fidgeted, became *distrait,* and allowed the conversation to lag. From time to time he glanced uneasily toward the piano, but Mrs. Van Sant seemed to have forgotten him and Trumbull. She urged Lee to play again and again, but at last he rose to go.

"Mr. Lee always fills me with envy," she remarked, as she came forward, "and yet I torment myself by making him show me how much better he can play my favorite pieces than I can play them myself. My hands are so small that I can't strike an octave accurately." She held them up and regarded them with a rueful expression. "I hate a small hand; it always looks so incompetent." She was well aware that at least two of the men present were fascinated by those small hands and by her arraignment of them.

"You ought to have my long antennæ," the musician remarked.

"I suspect a Beethoven was lost to the world in you, Mr. Lee," Babington said, with an effort at courtesy.

"To make an indifferent professor," Lee supplemented lightly. "Mrs. Van Sant, if we stay any longer you will be compelled to invite us to dinner."

"I wish you would stay," she answered.

"Discretion is the better part of hospitality," he said. As she caught his expression she felt that he referred rather to the danger of an inharmonious dinner than to the inconvenience their acceptance of her invitation might cause her. He bowed to her and to the president with great suavity, and the two friends took their departure together.

Babington was not slow to follow their example. On the way home he discovered that he regarded Lee with permanent irritation, and he strove to turn his thoughts to a pleasanter subject. His hostess' reference to Mrs. Tupper came back to his mind and teased him with speculation. What a witch she was! He suspected that the indescribable possessor of those millions was a myth of her own fabrication.

CHAPTER VI

TUPPER'S WIDOW

About a week later Babington went over to the capital to see the governor by appointment. He invited his Excellency to lunch with him at the University Club, of which he had been made a member upon his arrival in Argos. A plan was forming in the president's mind to give the governor an honorary degree at the university and to admit him to membership in the club. There was ample precedent for the action, and only the governor's hostility to the university stood in the way. Babington believed that this hostility was partly feigned to win popular approval, and partly the result of an unacknowledged jealousy. The governor had decided that the grapes which hung beyond his reach in his youth were sour, but Babington was inclined to think that his Excellency would discover a different flavor when they were placed in his hand.

During the lunch he said very little about the needs of the university, but confined himself to topics of general interest and to the telling of good stories. In the genial atmosphere of the grill-room artificial differences and supposed hostilities melted away, and when Babington parted from the gover-

nor he felt that his efforts to establish an *entente cordiale* had not been altogether in vain.

Babington's predecessor would have found the task impossible; in fact, it would never have occurred to him to undertake it, for he was a scholar of the old school, a mugwump by nature and education, and would as soon have dined with the devil as with a political boss. But Babington saw the necessity of agreeing with his adversary while in the way with him, and he left the adversary subtly flattered, pleased, almost disarmed.

When they parted at the door of the club the president turned from the main street and wandered away without definite design. He wished to be alone and think. The afternoon was perfectly bright and cloudless. A recent fall of snow still lay unsullied in the less frequented thoroughfares. From the bare branches of the trees and the eaves of the houses long, glittering icicles depended and sent bright drops of water into the melting snow.

The president found a cigar in his pocket and lighted it with a sense of freedom from observation. Harmless as the habit was, he divined that many of the students imposed a kind of ministerial standard upon him, and he had no desire to offend the prejudices of that class. But now he was in a strange place, and the feeling of being lost was grateful to him. He walked on and on, with a comfortable consciousness of having scored a point in a difficult game, and moved by a spirit of mild adventure.

He looked at the houses he passed and speculated idly as to the position of the inhabitants of the

more interesting. Now and again his thoughts reverted to Plow, who loomed like a troublous phantom in the background of his consciousness. The professor's manner somehow conveyed the impression of having dropped the president, rather than the impression of having been dropped by him. Babington began to realize that the university might not be big enough for them both, and hoped that Plow would be called to another position.

The thought of the professor naturally suggested Mrs. Van Sant. What was his standing in her house? He saw that Plow and Lee were her chief admirers, and for some inexplicable reason he resented Plow's admiration more than he did Lee's. Perhaps it was because he felt that Lee was too old a friend of Mrs. Van Sant's to be her lover. Then he smiled to think that he should consider either of them in that connection, and admitted to himself that he had become vitally interested in her likes and dislikes.

When he reached this conclusion he looked up to find himself standing before an old house set well back from the street. The size of the grounds, and especially the appearance of neglect which the whole place presented, arrested his attention. Here was evidently an example of the transitory nature of riches. He stood by the gate and glanced up and down the long line of the fence. In some places it was broken and lying flat on the ground. Each picket of the part that still stood was capped by a little hood of snow that invested the ruin with a transient beauty.

Far off, under a tree, he noticed an old-fashioned carriage, its wheels warped this way and that, its dash-board rent, the cushions, once so elegant, rotting in the weather. There were no tracks of wheels leading to the dilapidated stable.

The gate at which he stood was directly opposite the front door of the house. He noted the two long lines of intervening maples, and was reminded of the street of a New England village. In various places on the grounds he saw stone and iron statues of animals and mythological creatures; here a deer, there an iron mastiff, yonder a ruined grotto guarded by a figure of Pan.

The house itself confirmed these evidences of a bygone taste. The architect had evidently indulged a riotous fancy. There was one large central tower, and a wealth of bow windows. About the lower story ran a veranda, the roof held up by slender iron supports of an intricate open pattern that had long since lost almost every vestige of the green paint with which they were once adorned. The plaster on the walls had dropped off in unsightly patches, disclosing the bricks beneath. The builder had spared no expense, and Babington smiled to imagine with what pride he had viewed his inharmonious mansion. A narrow footpath between the maples showed that the house was still inhabited. He looked more closely and saw a faint curl of smoke issuing from one of the chimneys.

Babington's curiosity was actively aroused and he looked down the street in search of some one of whom he might inquire the history of the place.

An old woman turned the corner and came toward him. A shawl enveloped her head, and she carried a market basket on her arm. As she drew near he saw that she intended to enter the gate, and supposed that he had met the caretaker of the place.

A second glance caused him to doubt his first impression, for with habitual accuracy in observing details he noted the camel's-hair shawl and the silk of the woman's skirt. Her eyes met his with a flash of recognition, and he raised his hat.

"Can you tell me who lives here?" he asked. "Perhaps I ought to say who used to live here, for the place looks as if it had a history."

"I know you," she returned, much as one might say, "I saw you kill cock robin." Then she proved her assertion by adding, "You're Professor Babington, who has come to run the college over in Argos."

"Then you have the advantage of me," he answered pleasantly.

"Everybody was at the inauguration," she explained. "Curiosity."

He could think of no rejoinder, and repeated his question in regard to the house.

"Mine," she said, tapping her breast; "all mine. Everything on the place is mine to do with as I please."

There was an unmistakable note of defiance in the declaration that moved him to wonder.

"Of course," he assented.

"I see you've got good sense," she said approvingly. "There's some that haven't got sense

enough to mind their own business; but old Kate Tupper can take care of herself all right, even if she is alone in the world."

So this was Kate Tupper! He saw now that she was no myth, and wondered whether she were as rich as Mrs. Van Sant had said.

"The builder of this house must have been a prominent man in these parts," he ventured.

"He built the first railroad through this state," she declared proudly, "and the first street-car track in this town, and the first bank, and the first everything. But he got kind o' foolish in his old age—wanted to give all his money to that college of yours. I put a stop to that."

He saw at last the extent of Mrs. Van Sant's jest. She must have known of this intention and its frustration.

"How was that?" he asked. "Was he a graduate of the university?"

She sniffed scornfully.

"Graduate of nothing! Why, that college wasn't even thought of when he came here. That's what I said to him. 'Lemuel,' I said, 'don't be a fool. What do you want to give your hard-earned money to that measly college for? What good would that do? You never needed to go to college. What's the use of giving money so that a lot of lazy scamps can have an easy time of it when they ought to be earning their bread and butter, so that they can go yelling around the streets when honest folks are in bed?' That's what I said to him, and he saw that

I was right. So he left it all to me." She tapped her breast again, with the same air of defiance.

As Babington listened to her he suspected that her mind was somewhat affected. The mention of the bequest the old man had intended to leave the university gave him an inspiration. In spite of the hostility she expressed to the cause of learning, he entertained a sudden hope that he might induce her to fulfil her husband's wishes. It was curious, he thought, that she should volunteer to tell him about it, as if she were on the defensive. Was that the meaning of her defiance? Did she imagine that she must justify herself to him? It was a long shot, but he determined to risk it.

"What you say about the foolishness of young men in college is only too true in many cases," he admitted, "but I think outsiders are deceived by the noise of a few. They don't hear the great majority studying night after night in their rooms. The men that make the noise in the streets are the rich men's sons who don't need any money. We want money for the poor fellows who don't make any noise. They'll make a noise of a better kind in the world some day."

She broke into a sudden wintry grin.

"You're smooth," she declared. "I like you. Old Tupper's boy was one of the noisy kind. That's why I turned him out to shift for himself, as his father did before him. His sister was a hussy, too. It was the best thing that ever happened to them. They tried the law on me, and I had to give them something to cry quits. She's

dead, and he's gone off for good. It'll be for his own good, too, not to come back here fooling around me. But come in and sit down. I'm an old woman. I can't stand out in the snow all the afternoon."

He took her basket, and the sense of adventure with which he had begun his walk deepened as he followed her up the narrow path. When they reached the veranda she pushed open one of the windows that extended to the floor, instead of entering at the door.

"The lock won't work," she grumbled. "I won't send for a man to fix it. He'd try to rob me, but they can't get ahead of old Kate. And there's that hussy of a servant. She could no more go to market than a cat could fly, so I have to go myself, at my age, or else get robbed by the butcher. Cash, that's what I pay. I won't have any bills coming into my house. Thieves!"

Babington started at the energy with which she uttered the last word. He half expected to be confronted in the dim room in which he now stood by a man with a revolver, who should demand his money or his life. But it appeared that the exclamation was directed against the absent tradespeople, and he took heart to look at his surroundings.

He stood in a dismal room of great size and height. In the dim light that streamed through the rents in the shutters he could see the gleam of tall mirrors and tarnished picture frames. There was something cold and forbidding in the massive mar-

ble mantel and the rigid statues in the corners. Cobwebs hung from the ceiling, and dust lay thick on the surface of the grand piano. Nothing he had ever seen impressed him as quite so dismal as that great room, with its vulgar display, its suggestion of futile aspiration after elegance. He shivered, for there was no fire in the place, and he felt as if he were standing in a tomb.

"I haven't used this room since Tupper died," she remarked. She led the way through a long, dark hall and opened a door into a room of such different character that he could scarcely believe his eyes. It was a cheerful sitting-room, with a western exposure. The sunlight streamed in at the windows and a generous fire of coals burned in the Franklin stove. The stove reminded him of a country railroad-station, and he noticed that the fireplace had been bricked up. Two beautiful Irish setters sniffed at him with hostile inquiry and then retreated under the table at their mistress' sharp command. They were evidently so unaccustomed to strangers as to be lacking in the friendliness of their breed.

"There's nothing you don't see," his hostess remarked, "even if you don't pretend to." She motioned him to a chair and put her wraps on a sewing machine in the corner. "You fools," she cried to the dogs, "shut up! Didn't you ever see any one before? I like dogs," she continued. "They've generally got such good sense. But I'm tired of people palavering around."

"I see you're fond of the theater, too," he re-

joined, indicating with a gesture a number of lithographs of actors and actresses tacked to the walls. "There's nothing I like so much myself as a diversion. It always gives me a new lease on life to go to a good play."

"You wasn't brought up that way," she guessed shrewdly.

"How could you tell?" he asked in surprise.

"How could I tell? I just naturally knew it. No more was I, but a body must do something. What I like about the theater is the elbow room. You pay your money and don't have to stop and palaver at the door and shake hands with people. You don't have to have any one pawing you and asking you to come again, and it kind of livens you up."

"Evidently you are contrasting the theater with the church," he said, with a laugh.

She sniffed again in a way he already recognized as characteristic.

"Church! Money, money, money; that's what they want. Money for little niggers in Africa, and for dirty, good-for-nothing Indians. And what do you get for your pains? Gossip; that's what you get. Slander; everybody poking his nose into other people's business."

Babington was not concerned in defending the church.

"I see you don't want to say anything against the church," she said, with her wintry smile. "I read in the papers of your preaching in your own church in Argos."

He seized the opportunity to turn the conversation back to the university. He told her of the article in the Catholic paper, and commented on the injustice it had done him. She was more interested than he had yet seen her. He guessed that she would sympathize with his point of view, but he had not divined the intensity of her protestantism.

"Father O'Toole!" she flamed out. "Tupper's first wife was a Catholic, and I used to see him sliding in and out of this house. Tupper didn't seem to care, the old fool."

She saw that the implication of her words made him uncomfortable and laughed harshly.

"I'm a dreadful old woman, and I call a spade a spade. You've got some ministers over there teaching the boys, haven't you? I'm glad of it." She chuckled, as if in some way she had got the better of O'Toole.

Fortune seemed to be smiling on the president. He became confidential. He told her of the difficulties of his position, of the fractious nature of some of his professors, of the need of money in all departments. Then he drew a picture of poor students who lived on a few dollars a week, admitting much to humor her prejudices, but calling her attention to the need of instruction in such subjects as he thought she might respect.

Most women were moved by his persuasive manner and fine voice, and even old Kate forgot to be sarcastic. He had never preached more eloquently the gospel of the university. He complimented

self-made men, but declared that poor students were also self-made. There was no argument against the university with which he was not familiar, and he was a special pleader well armed. His very confidence in her was a compliment. She had been heartless in the case of her stepson, moved by jealousy and suspicion, but this was something impersonal, and her sympathy, long atrophied, was touched. Suddenly, however, her eyes took on a suspicious look, and she interrupted him.

"You're like the rest of them. You want money, too, but you won't get any of it from me." She tapped the floor with her foot, and rocked rapidly back and forth. "Everybody wants to get money out of me. That good-for-nothing boy of Tupper's will come back after I'm dead and gone and spend what his poor father slaved to make. But I'm not gone yet. I'm mistress here yet."

"I suppose the young man is a Catholic?" he suggested.

"That's what O'Toole says!" she cried. "But he don't get a cent of the money for his church if I can help it; not a cent."

"I must be getting back to Argos," he said, rising. "There's just one thing I should like to call your attention to before I go. I've known of a number of public-spirited people leaving their money, or a part of it, to colleges in trust. The donors get the whole interest of the money as long as they live, and are relieved of all care. In the case of a state university the interest is greater, because a state institution is freed from taxation. If you adopted some

such policy you could be sure that the money would not be put to unworthy uses."

As he uttered these words he felt a slight twinge of compunction in regard to the absent heir whose claims he thus opposed. But had not Mr. Tupper himself planned to make a bequest to the university? What right had this ignorant old woman to defeat such a beneficent purpose? The thought moved him to clinch the argument.

"Your late husband's wishes would be served as well as your own. He was a self-made man, and yet he must have seen that a university can do more for worthy young men, without spoiling them, than they can do single-handed for themselves."

He saw that she was impressed, though she would not admit it.

"Have something warm to drink before you go," she said. "It's getting colder."

She went to the side of the room and pulled a bell rope. He heard a faint jingle in the kitchen and pictured the spiral wires with little bells attached, such as he had known in his boyhood. It seemed a strange anachronism in the days of electricity. A woman appeared and Mrs. Tupper ordered hot water and whiskey.

"Those bell ropes remind me of the kind I used to see in my grandmother's house," he remarked.

"I wouldn't have an electric buzzer in the place," she rejoined. "It would make me feel as if I was being electrocuted every time the thing went off."

When he had drunk his toddy she accompanied him to the window at which he had entered. The

subject of the university was not again mentioned between them.

"Come and see me some time," she said. "I'm a lonely old woman and I don't go out much now. Most people are such fools that I don't want them around, but you've got some common sense."

He thanked her, laughing at the compliment, and passed down the pathway. When he reached the gate he looked back, but she had disappeared. The sun was sinking behind the house and the shadows lengthened over the desolate scene. How like the abode of a witch or a miser it seemed! Old Kate Tupper was part and parcel of her habitat, he mused. No wonder Mrs. Van Sant had said that she must be seen to be believed.

CHAPTER VII

THE FIGURE OF A DREAM

Lee and Trumbull stood in front of the building of the Young Women's Christian Association one evening in February and argued the *pros* and *cons* of entering. Already the reception was in full swing and they could hear the college glee-club "rendering a selection."

"Hang it, man," Trumbull protested irritably, "why the devil do you want me to go in there?"

"I wish to win you from the enticements of the gentleman you have just mentioned," Lee returned. "I want you to get a glimpse of the nobler side of university life."

The archæologist was moved to the ghost of an exasperated laugh.

"Well, it's too late to do anything else now. I did have some work to do, but I might as well waste my whole evening, now that I've begun. I'd just as soon be hung for an old sheep as a lamb."

"I don't quite see the point of the proverb," his friend remarked. "I'm not going to take you in that you may be hung for an old sheep. You are an old sheep now. I'm going to take you in that you may be changed into a white lamb. I wish to add one to the metamorphoses of Ovid."

He took Trumbull by the arm and drew him beyond the earshot of passing students.

"Have you never found on your desk a little *billet doux,* a note from the co-eds, in which you were cordially invited to attend a reception? When they are cordial ought you to be unkind?"

"You want to go in to prop up your waning popularity," Trumbull declared.

"That's it, exactly," Lee assented. "In spite of your mixture of metaphors, you see the point. You might have expressed it better, but it is something to have seen it. Now if anybody inquires after your spiritual welfare I want you to be polite about it."

He was still chuckling at Trumbull's discomfiture when they reached the door and shook hands with the reception committee. Mrs. Everett was assisting.

"On duty, I see," he remarked, as they stood a little apart from the others.

"Oh, I rather enjoy it," she answered with a smile. "The girls are very nice."

"Of course they are; that's what I told Trumbull. He doesn't get many of them in his courses, and has been pleased to adopt a scornful attitude toward them. You see they've got hold of him now. I guessed by their greeting that they regarded us both as possible converts."

He dragged his friend on from room to room and introduced him to many students. It seemed to the unwilling archæologist that Lee knew every one. Their conversation with the undergraduates turned upon the weather, the decorations of the room, the

prospect of a good baseball team in the spring. Trumbull was not a man to conceal his boredom, and Lee enjoyed the basilisk stare of his cold eyes, the unconscious brusqueness of his replies to innocent inanities.

In all that large crowd there was only a handful of teachers; some who made such receptions a stepping-stone to popularity; others who were drawn by religious affiliations. They were not the men Lee cared to see, and he made no effort to reach them. He began to wonder whether his elaborate joke on Trumbull were worth while. There was nothing new for him to study in the psychology of undergraduate life. He knew it all: the lack of piquancy and romance in the relation of the sexes, the unimaginative level on which they met. He would not have had it otherwise, but it palled upon him.

"I don't wonder," he said to Trumbull as they stood sipping lemonade in a corner, "that Hymen plays such a small part in college life. I remember that when I was an undergraduate we used to invite girls from the capital to our dances, and I understand the men are just as ungallant now as we were."

"What would you have?" Trumbull asked scornfully. "A matrimonial agency?"

"I knew lemonade would make you irritable," Lee rejoined.

One of his students came up and gave him the greeting of a comrade. As he poured her a glass of lemonade Trumbull took the opportunity to slip away.

"I suppose I'm going to get a horribly low mark in English," she began.

"I hope not," he answered. He would have said more, but he saw that she had forgotten him. Her eyes were roving restlessly over the room.

"There's Doctor Brown!" she cried. "I wish you would introduce me to him. I want to take his course in elegiac poetry next half. They say it's a cinch."

When Brown joined them Lee's memory was for once at fault. He could not recall the girl's name.

"Merry," she prompted. "My name is Merry."

He remembered now that this was the student that had signed her enrolment card *E. Ross Merry.* At first sight of her bold signature he had supposed it the name of a man and had called upon Mr. Merry to recite, much to the amusement of the class. How could he know that E. stood for Ethel, rather than for Edward?

Brown looked at him with his malevolent smile. He did not forget the names of his students, and Lee's discomfiture pleased him.

"To what happy accident do we owe the pleasure of your company here to-night?" he demanded.

"No accident, I assure you," Lee answered with suavity. "My coming was premeditated. I'm a new candidate for a pair of wings."

The philologue flushed angrily, and E. Ross Merry laughed. Brown had been caricatured in the last Junior Annual as an angel. He felt it was a shabby return for his devotion to the religious welfare of the students, but it made him only the more

determined to do his duty. His anger against Lee was partly due to the fact that he regarded his jest as a covert sneer at religion.

Lee strolled away without waiting for a counter shot. He had not gone far when a young man stopped him and demanded the year of his graduation from college. He was engaged in pinning the year of each man's class to his coat. The professor mentioned a date ten years before, and accepted the label.

"You're getting to be a back number," the student remarked cheerfully.

"I'm afraid I am," Lee replied, "but I think it unkind of you to expose the fact. If any one adds ten years to the average age of graduation he can arrive at an approximate estimate of the length of my earthly pilgrimage. If there are any women graduates here of some years' standing I advise you to steer clear of them with your obnoxious labels."

"That's no pipe dream, either," the student replied, grinning. "Much obliged for the advice, Professor."

Lee's good spirits had somehow ebbed, and he became depressed. He was suddenly weary of the students that came and went year by year in great batches. Their numbers made individual attention impossible, and he knew that he reached only a few. There were times when the performances of the enlightened gave him a satisfaction that compensated for the failures of the dullards, but to-night the undergraduate body seemed to him a great, crude, fluctuating mass, without culture or congruity.

He was attracted by the sound of Fyffe's voice from the main room and joined the crowd that drifted toward the center of attraction. The little professor was in the full tide of one of his popular harangues. His theme was football, and he handled it in a jocund maner that brought shouts of laughter and applause from his listeners. He appealed to their patriotism by cracking many a sly joke upon Washington University. His head was thrown back, the large vein in his forehead came and went, his voice, so out of all proportion to his stature, filled the room to the end and echoed through the hall beyond. He seemed almost a pet of the strapping young men and women about him, and no one enjoyed his witticisms more than he did himself.

Lee laughed with the rest, for Fyffe was irresistible. A few moments before he had been filled with vague self-dissatisfaction, for he felt that his want of sympathy with all sides of undergraduate life might be due to a lack in himself. He was too sound at the core to be ignorant of the weakness of cynicism, and was not proud of the discerning imp within him. As he saw Fyffe thus disporting himself for a brief applause he was thankful that he himself had never played the rôle of public entertainer. There was just a suggestion of the variety show in the performance, just a hint of patronage in the applauders. He saw President Babington standing in the crowd, smiling his approval, like a minister, Lee thought, watching his Sunday-school superintendent amuse the children.

The crowd pressed about him. Gradually he became conscious of a delicate warmth that pervaded him with a sense of restfulness and comfort, and, looking down, he saw the girl he had noticed at Mrs. Van Sant's standing close at his side. Mrs. Van Sant had told him who she was, a poor student working her way through college, whom she had employed that evening in an emergency. Lee had pretended to doubt her contention that Miss Hathaway was a lady, but he felt now that she was. He was ashamed of the wanton impulse that made him seek her eyes for just one moment. She appeared unconscious of his consciousness ot her presence, though he knew instinctively that she was not.

Something in her exquisite beauty, in her delicacy, put his first impulse to the blush. He was glad to stand very near her, to note the curve of her cheek, the undulating mass of dark hair gathered in a coil at the nape of her neck, the quiver of her long lashes. The poet within him was always stirred by beauty. The very fineness of his sensibilities made him resent any lack of loveliness in women. Now his mood was tinged with romance. Her pressure against him was sweet to his senses. Vagrant fancies, illusive impulses, stirred within him. He had a flitting glimpse of an earlier self, a self in which there was more of the witchery of dawn and twilight, more knowledge of the wonder of springtime and of love.

It was a curious rejuvenescence which this girl wrought within him, he reflected; and yet why should he ever lose the sense of adventure and won-

der that once made life a series of vivid impressions, of alluring possibilities? As he looked down that vanishing vista a feeling of sadness stole over him. He no longer heard the speaker or the loud laughter of the bystanders. For him there was just one person in that room, nestled now against his side, soon to be separated from him, perhaps forever. Just so he had seen a lovely face in the car, in the crowded theater, fit subject for a moment's dream. Just so he had often stood beside one he might have loved, and had never seen her again.

When the speech was over and the crowd drifted apart he made no effort to find Trumbull. He wished to be alone and think. The girl had left him quickly, almost as if she feared he might speak to her or find an opportunity of making her acquaintance. He accepted her impulse with a resignation born of his present mood. Her instinct was right. The dormant cynicism of his nature awoke, colored by wistfulness. He felt that there was nothing personal in his emotions, that her very beauty made them impersonal. Beauty of the highest type was inaccessible, a minister to the divine discontent that keeps the soul alive. Always through life it would be the same. Some passing face, some evanescent smile, would stir within him the longing for possession. It was not love; it was the love of love.

As he walked homeward he wondered at the vagrancy of men's fancies. He knew that his love for Mrs. Van Sant was personal and abiding. Was this experience disloyalty to her? He pondered long, but the question found no answer.

CHAPTER VIII

A BOW OF MAGENTA RIBBON

One morning in May the people of Argos were amazed to read in *The Times* that Mrs. Tupper had given two hundred thousand dollars to the university in trust, the whole sum to go to the institution at her death. Though the president's visits were not unknown, very few had believed that he could work this miracle. It was generally supposed to be easier to wring water from a stone than money from Mrs. Tupper; but there it was in cold print, and even *The Times* would scarcely dare publish such a piece of news without authority.

There was a widespread feeling of elation among the university supporters, which was but little dampened by the reminder of the more cynical that there was a string tied to the gift, and that old Kate was good for ten or twenty years more of life.

To the younger generation the name of Tupper was almost legendary, if they knew it at all, so rapidly does the whirligig of time bring new names to the front and bury in oblivion the deeds of the pioneers. Now people began to inquire old Kate's age and to speculate on her chances of becoming a centenarian. Some were wicked enough to re-

mark that it would be a good thing if she should die forthwith, but others hoped she would postpone the event until she had made over the rest of her great fortune to the university. After all, two hundred thousand dollars was but a drop in the bucket compared with the millions she was known to possess. What could she do with so much money? She had given little enough.

Out of all this buzz of comment only a pæan of praises reached the lonely old woman as she sat reading the papers in her sunny sitting-room, and though she had long considered herself impervious to blarney, she sniffed gratefully the sweet-smelling savor of adulation.

To President Babington the triumph of his efforts was almost as unexpected as to the world at large, for her letter had come after an unusually trying interview from which he had departed in despair. There was a touch of the eternal feminine in the suddenness of her repentance. It was an appeal to her pride and to her hope of immortal memory among men that had won the day, though when he suggested that she provide a "Kate Tupper Foundation," the thought of death which the terms of the gift implied caused her to berate him soundly.

When he called to thank her for the gift her greeting was almost shy. He noted with astonishment that she had inserted a bow of magenta colored ribbon in her hair and felt with a curious misgiving that the adornment was meant for him. She seated herself by the open window and rocked rapidly back and forth while she listened to his expres-

sions of gratification. The whole outside world was teeming with the rejuvenescence of springtime, and Mrs. Tupper also had taken a new lease on life. If those who had wished her early demise could have seen the vitality of her shrewd eyes and the unusual color in her face they would have been compelled to abandon their charitable hope.

"The young women of the university are planning to give you a reception in the gymnasium," the president said. "The friends of the university are all eager to shake hands with their fairy godmother."

"I guess some of your young scamps have burned my carriage," she rejoined, ignoring for the time his suggestion. "They set fire to it last night. I don't mind, though. I put it out there in the first place so that Tupper's brat couldn't ride in it after I'm gone."

He stepped to the window and looked at the patch of ashes on the grass, which was all that remained of the much-enduring vehicle.

"Perhaps it was a case of spontaneous combustion," he said with a laugh. "I don't think any of my boys could be so ungrateful."

He wisely refrained from returning to the subject of the reception until she had become accustomed to the idea.

"I see you've been housecleaning," he remarked, as he resumed his chair. For the first time since his acquaintance with her began he had walked through the front door. Workmen were repairing the shutters of the windows and the rents in the floor of the

veranda. The old fence had been cleared away, preparatory to a new one. From the parlor came the sound of a thumping on the keys of the grand piano, where the tuner was at work. None of these things was lost upon the president.

"It's about time something was done," she answered with a touch of confusion. "You ain't never seen the house, I guess. I'd like to show it to you."

He followed her into the parlor whose walls he now saw clearly, for the shutters were thrown wide.

"That's Tupper," she said, pointing to a portrait.

Babington looked at the portrait, and guessed that either the millionaire had let the contract to the lowest bidder, or that he had not been able to find an artist of ability in the state. Even a cursory glance showed him the faults of drawing and color, but, despite these defects, the force and vulgarity of the subject were graphically depicted. The type was unmistakable. The eyes were cold and hard, the smooth-shaven upper lip relentless. The fringe of beard suggested a prosperous farmer or rural deacon. He noted every detail, down to the massive gold watch-chain and pendent charm. The millionaire was represented sitting in a plush chair, with one hand resting on the tasseled arm, while the fingers of the other held a newspaper. By his side stood the figure of a little boy, but the face was a blank.

"I see the artist didn't finish his work," Babington remarked.

"Yes, he did, though," she answered, "but I had that brat's face painted out."

"Mr. Tupper must have been a strong character," he commented.

"He was a smart one," she assented. "'Kate,' he used to say to me, 'no one could track me by the pennies I've dropped.' And no more they could."

She led him from room to room and related many anecdotes of the place. She showed him the window through which some enemy had sent a bullet that narrowly missed the millionaire as he sat at dinner. If there was any detail concerning the first Mrs. Tupper and the "brats" which she had not confided to him he heard it before his departure. Yet she seemed less vindictive than usual. There was something of the softened mood of reminiscence in her talk, as if the harsh outlines of her wrongs were blurred by distance.

As they stood on the veranda she returned unexpectedly to her suspicions of the president's motives.

"There's no fool like an old fool," she snapped, in a kind of panic. "Now that I've begun to throw my money away I suppose I won't stop till I'm a beggar."

"But you only gave it in trust," he said soothingly, "and the interest is yours as long as you need it."

The next moment he wondered at his stupidity in repeating this mistake. It was one thing for her to speak of herself as old and to refer to the time when she should be "gone"; but it was quite another thing in him. She broke into a nervous fury.

"As long as I need it! I suppose you hope I'll die soon, so that you can have it all." He raised his

hand and tried to protest, but she continued: "I don't know what's got into me. This old house was good enough before, but I've gone and put a lot of money into useless repairs, and they're robbing me every minute. What did you come here for and put such high-falutin' notions in my head? I suppose I've got to get a lot of other things now if I'm going to begin going to parties. I'll have to get a new carriage and horses and a man—"

"I hope you will allow me to call for you in my own carriage for this particular reception," he interposed.

She melted immediately, with one of her rapid changes of emotion which he had come to expect.

"Thank you," she said, "thank you. You're very kind." She flushed with pleasure and stood nodding and smiling from the steps as he mounted his horse; a pathetic and laughable figure, with the bow of magenta ribbon awry upon her wintry head.

CHAPTER IX

A FREE TONGUE

Perhaps in no place was criticism more free and less fatal than at Argos. Of the two hundred men that constituted the teaching force of the university there was scarcely one against whom serious charges were not made at one time or another, charges which, if true, ought to have caused his dismissal.

The report of Fyffe's drinking, for example, was widespread. He had been seen coming from "the captain's," a candy and tobacco shop near the university, where liquor was sold secretly in defiance of the law. Many doubted the truth of the story, but there was none that had not heard it. Even the papers made reference to the alcoholic excesses of "a certain eminent scientist connected with the State University," but references of this kind did not seem to injure his position in the least. His courses were always crowded; he spoke in public with applause; in short, his qualities were such that he carried easily a load of opprobrium that would have crushed a man less able.

It may have been that the prevalence of criticism, and the resulting confusion between the true and false, helped the guilty to escape while it injured the

innocent. Professor Everett was called stupid and slow; Plow consorted with anarchists; Brown was a canting hypocrite; Lee made love to the co-eds; Trumbull lived in the capital, that he might put a quart of claret under his vest every night at a French dinner; Stuart was cruel to his wife, hated the United States, and was much given to self-advertisement. Every one knew what professor tyrannized over his subordinates, what subordinates feared their professor, what men were rivals for promotion, and what they said of each other.

Naturally enough, the president received the attention his position demanded, though people were usually careful to whom they confided their opinion, and no one dared to speak disparagingly of him to Fyffe. His enemies said that he was a snob, a tailor-made man, and a hypocrite. His pictures were seen in all the principal photographers' windows in the capital, and the irreverent made comments upon his vanity as they saw him staring roundly at them from the card, clad in all the imposing insignia of his office. Many put a sinister interpretation on his success in obtaining Mrs. Tupper's gift. They said that he was earning his salary, and doing just exactly what a showy and plausible man could do better than a scholar and a gentleman. Every one knew that he and Plow and Lee were in love with Mrs. Van Sant, and that the president was watching for an opportunity to dismiss his more formidable rival on the ground of his anarchistic sympathies. Many remarked that he

underrated Lee's chances, and prophesied that the professor of English would yet win the prize.

To a new arrival in Argos all this seething caldron of gossip was appalling, but as time went on he began to estimate it at its true worth. He even began to take part, and knew that he was not injuring any one seriously. Finally he saw that it was all an expression of the western freedom of speech and sense of humor. No one really believed the stories, but they made spicy subjects for conversation. Almost all the men thus attacked were respected, and some were loved. Beneath that keen sense of the ridiculous there was a solid foundation of earnestness and probity, and a real appreciation of the new president's merits.

The evening before the reception that was to be given to Mrs. Tupper the president met Professor Fyffe as he left his office. The confidences between the two men in regard to Plow had passed the stage of suggestion and innuendo. As they made their way across the campus Fyffe introduced the subject himself.

"Plow was holding forth at the table in the restaurant again yesterday," he began.

"Unionism?" Babington queried, with something like a sneer.

"Of a new kind," Fyffe continued. "He recommends a union of poor teachers to enforce living wages."

The president uttered an exclamation.

"By heavens, this is going a step too far! In all decency he ought to see that there is a limit."

"Apparently he doesn't," the professor rejoined. "Of course he spoke in general terms, and didn't mention names. Most of the men at the table were instructors, and they were talking as usual about their wrongs."

"Yes," said Babington. "Here's a bench. Tell me about it."

They seated themselves and Fyffe went on, digging up the young grass with his cane.

"I don't want to say anything about the young fellows. It's natural for them to growl; but Plow gets three thousand a year, and he ought to be satisfied. He's a bachelor, too."

"It isn't for himself he burns," said Babington, with bitter sarcasm. "His great heart beats for the poor working man. But what were the points of the indictment?"

"There were a good many. First he echoed Stuart's well-known sentiments and criticized American universities for being social clubs instead of seminaries of research—too many receptions and too much show. Then he spoke of the fact that the president of an American university is an absolute despot, that he has more power than the head of any European university. He said it was a curious anomaly in a republic, and all of a piece with the industrial tyranny of the times. And he wound up by speaking of salaries. He said they were in most cases utterly inadequate and that we couldn't expect any productive scholarship from young men who were so poor that they had to help their wives do housework."

"And what did you say?" the president asked.

"I? Oh, not much. I thought it a pity to interrupt his oration. He went on to say that he didn't place the responsibility for these conditions on any one man—"

"Very considerate of my feelings," Babington interposed.

—"but that the results were beginning to be apparent."

"And what were they?"

"The great power of the president of an American university made the teachers feel insecure. They kept their eyes open for better places, for they were usually on bad terms with the president and held him responsible for their condition. Then he harked back to the subject of salaries. He declared that a spirit of social emulation had crept into the university within his memory, and that this was due to great donations by private persons, and to the influence of rich outsiders that had come to live in Argos. The instructors were obliged to do all sorts of things to get their wives proper dresses for swell receptions. Some did private tutoring, and thus laid themselves open to the charge of bribery by students that had failed to pass. Others wrote twaddle for the newspapers; others lectured; some wrote elementary text-books, or novels. Every spare moment was put into the effort to get more money instead of into a specialty. He ended with the deepest minor chord of all, the sentiment being that money now has more influence than merit."

There followed a moment of silence.

"And I forgot," Fyffe added, laughing. "He said the instructors were too poor to be able to afford the luxury of having children."

"Then why in heaven's name haven't they sense enough to remain single?" Babington fumed. "It isn't my fault if the legislature won't appropriate sufficient money to pay them what they want. I'm having a hard time as it is getting them to give me a house fit to live in. The instructors ought to reckon the honor of the position as something. I did. I began on nine hundred a year, but I stood to my guns and had the good sense not to burden myself with a wife. I don't claim that conditions are perfect, but it seems to me that Plow's insinuations are treacherous, to put it mildly."

"His reference to donations by private persons looked that way," the other admitted, "especially just after Mrs. Tupper's gift. But I must say I don't think he meant it personally. We mustn't expect good balance in a reformer. His mind has been running on labor problems so long that he has become a crank."

"He's been at it again, too," said Babington, rising with a sigh. "I had hoped he would subside, but his last speech was the worst yet. I've got to get rid of him sooner or later, but how? He has a strong following."

"Just give him a little more time," Fyffe suggested. "Give him a little more rope, and he'll hang himself before long."

The professor was more unhappy than the president himself when he finally went slowly homeward

alone. By imperceptible degrees he had become a judge of the man whose popularity with the students rivalled his own, whose greater self-respect challenged his own confident bearing before the world. His hatred of that jovial plebeian who met his scorn with such indifference defied his better nature, and a bitter perversity hardened his heart toward the man he had wronged.

CHAPTER X

THE FAIRY GODMOTHER

As Lee entered the campus on the afternoon of the reception to Mrs. Tupper, he saw Brown coming down the path, and knew that they must meet. The whole world was bathed in the misty, balmy atmosphere of springtime; the sparrows were wrangling joyfully; the freshly cut grass loaded the breeze with a sweet, moist fragrance; a long procession of white clouds sailed slowly and majestically past the tower of the library. At sight of Brown, Lee's mood of enjoyment vanished. The man seemed to shadow the bright landscape as he moved nearer, and his approach was like a breath of chilling air.

"You're bound in the wrong direction," he remarked pleasantly. "Aren't you going to the reception?"

Brown came to a halt before him and barred the way.

"The reception," he sneered. "What have I to do with the reception? That's the way my road lies, out, out!" He motioned wildly toward the great world that lay beyond the university. Lee almost quailed before that fierce gesture. He noted

the lines of mental suffering on the instructor's face and he felt that it would be useless to pretend ignorance of the cause. On the previous night the board of regents had added three hundred dollars to his own salary for the coming year, but Brown's had been left as before.

"Don't take it so hard, Brown," he said. "You'll get your deserts yet."

"In heaven, I suppose," the other answered, with increasing bitterness, "but not here. And Everett couldn't do a thing for me, because he's neither rich nor a regent. How mighty is the power of the pull! You and Fyffe, and no one else. What have you done to deserve it?"

"Nothing," said Lee, calmly.

"But I have! I've really done something to deserve it, and yet, just because I haven't got a regent behind me, as you have, my work goes for nothing."

"Exactly," Lee returned. "That's the way of the world. I didn't deserve an increase of salary as much as you did, and yet I got it because my father and Judge Gates were old friends when my father was alive. You probably won't believe me when I say that I didn't ask the judge to use his influence for me, and that I think you have been treated badly, but such is the fact. Babington has no love for me, and no dislike of you. He doesn't care a twopence for either of us, but he wants the support of Judge Gates, and he thinks he can afford to ignore Everett's request for you."

He stated the case calmly and impersonally, but in reality he was deeply moved. He wished now

that he had never sharpened his wit on this embittered man. The case was so much more complicated than Brown supposed that he was stirred to pity for his blindness. The philologue had staked all his hope on scholarship and lost. He did not know the three cardinal requirements of a university teacher: scholarship, the ability to teach, and breeding. Few possessed all these requisites, but success was possible with any two of them. Brown possessed only the first, and he was incapable of understanding his lack. He was not at all mollified by Lee's frank admissions. At best he was not an attractive figure, but now his expression of hatred and sardonic humor made him repulsive.

"Oh, of course, you didn't speak to Gates!" he cried with contempt, and almost thrust his rival from the path as he moved on.

Lee turned and looked after him, his face crimson with resentment. Brown had practically given him the lie, but he made no effort to call him back, for he felt that he was scarcely accountable. There was a man, he reflected, that would do him a hurt if he could. More than once he had violated the unwritten law of professional courtesy by criticizing his rival's character and scholarship before the students. Brown was a teetotaler and detested tobacco. Lee had heard him refer to smoking as a crime, and he was wont to declare that this habit was the first step in a downward career. When they took their higher degrees together at the eastern university where they had first met, Lee gave a punch party to celebrate the event, but Brown declined to attend

what he called an orgy. He even refused to eat frozen pudding at the dining association's table when he discovered that the flavor he liked so much was due to a dash of rum. This was a real deprivation to him, but he endured it that he might not encourage the liquor traffic.

Inexplicable as this attitude of mind was to Lee, it indicated the one trait in Brown's character that he admired. The man had within him the stuff of which martyrs are made. Had he lived in the time of the Christian persecutions he would have gone to the cross for his faith, and Lee felt guiltily that he himself, under like circumstances, would have thought the new religion plebeian and would have preferred Plato and Marcus Aurelius to the Vulgate. He remembered the time, years ago in the east, when Brown had dragged him into a sailors' mission to play the little organ. He recalled Brown's prayer, the beads of perspiration on his brow, his wrath when the organist distributed tobacco among the puzzled old wrecks that had sought the shelter of the warm room.

He continued his way toward the gymnasium, sick at heart. In one comprehensive vision he saw all the scheming and jealousy of the university. Personally, he had never known the torment of the most malignant of human passions, and its exhibition in others had stirred him to amusement. Now the pitifulness of Brown's case touched his heart. He would willingly have given the money if he could, and he resolved to speak to Judge Gates about him before the time for promotions came again.

Preferment had always come easily to Lee. He was a sound scholar, and those that had the power of appointment knew it, but his social gifts diverted the attention of the many from his more solid acquirements. The world's reluctance to admit more than one excellence in the same man was exemplified in his case. Men like Brown, jealous of the sparkle and grace of his lectures, said that his large classes were due to a certain superficial cleverness. He stood up before the undergraduates and discussed his subject in the same easy, daring manner that stamped him in the drawing-room, but the more appreciative students derived an intellectual satisfaction from his presentation that was quite independent of the ripple on the surface. He was quite scornful of the fact that most of his hearers were women. The men were prone to elect the scientific courses, and he missed the inspiration of their independent attitude toward a teacher.

Mrs. Van Sant was just stepping from her carriage as he came up to the door, and they entered the hall together.

"Let me congratulate you," she said. "I read the report of the regents' meeting in the paper."

In a few words he told her of his conversation with Brown, and she divined his depression.

"Don't make yourself unhappy because some one else hasn't got his deserts and you have," she remarked lightly. "It isn't your fault."

He was struck with her unusual lack of sympathy, and wondered whether it were due to his im-

plied reflection on the president. A pang of something like jealousy went through him. He thought he had never seen her look more attractive. There was a subdued brilliancy about her that riveted his attention, and an air of mischief and expectancy.

"I'm longing to see old Kate," she murmured.

"Affectionate interest?" he suggested.

"Wicked curiosity. I came to laugh."

"And will remain to offer incense. That will be the main occupation of the multitude to-day, I understand."

She gave him a smile indicative of anything but a reverent frame of mind, and they made their way toward the spot where the president stood with Mrs. Tupper.

The reception was now well under way. The bright dresses of the girls flashed here and there under the banners that trailed from the walls and ceiling. Everywhere was motion and a murmuring sound, punctuated at intervals by laughter or by a louder burst of music from the orchestra in the balcony.

As they stood, waiting their turn, they had an opportunity to examine Mrs. Tupper at their leisure. The material of her gown was costly, black velvet trimmed with lace; but in the cut of the skirt another of her prejudices had asserted itself with ludicrous result, for it was as high as her ankles. Underneath the rim of the gown a pair of extraordinary feet obtruded themselves on the attention of the observant and tempted their risibility. A

bright spot of color burned in either sallow cheek, and she had left her spectacles upon her nose, as if the better to discern her enemies.

The president was faultlessly dressed, as usual. His bright Phi Beta Kappa key flashed conspicuously against the white expanse of his waistcoat. An odd speculation came into Lee's mind. Was the president's poise due in some measure to his faultless dress, or was his dress merely an outward expression of his mental poise?

No one would have guessed from Babington's manner that he was not entirely at his ease.

"I want you to meet Mrs. Tupper, our generous benefactress. Mrs. Tupper, this is Mrs. Everett, the wife of our professor of Latin."

Mrs. Tupper extended her hand stiffly.

"I'm delighted to meet you," said Mrs. Everett. "Mr. Everett is obliged to be absent to-day examining schools, but he wished to be remembered to you. I believe he had the pleasure of meeting you some time ago."

"Never heard of him," Mrs. Tupper rejoined, timid but defiant. She glanced appealingly at the president, as if he were her only friend in all that strange company. "I can't keep track of all the people I meet."

"It must be difficult for one in your position," the other answered, somewhat disconcerted. "I know my husband often says he has trouble remembering his students' names."

"I shouldn't think he would. He sees them every day, don't he? Well, if there ain't Sue Van Sant!

I thought you was in Washington, where you belong!"

"A bad penny turns up again, you know," Mrs. Van Sant answered, with a little deprecatory gesture, which Babington thought charming. "I've come back to Argos to go to school."

"I've no doubt you need it," the old lady retorted.

The president turned to Lee with a greeting both genial and ceremonious. He glanced at Mrs. Tupper, but the opportunity to present the professor had not yet arrived. He was quick to seize the chance offered by their momentary isolation. Only the previous evening he had discovered that Lee was a man to be reckoned with.

"I'm glad your salary has taken a sprout," he remarked. "We can't always do what we wish for our young men, but we do the best we can. The university is like a big boy who is outgrowing his clothes. While we are buying him a new hat we discover that he needs another pair of boots, but we mean to catch up with all his wants in time."

Lee had never found the president so affable before, and reflected scornfully upon the reason of the change. He did not relish a tone of condescension from one scarcely five years his senior, and threw back his head with an enigmatical smile.

"I can imagine you must be embarrassed by a wealth of wants," he remarked indifferently.

"And that's the only kind of wealth we are embarrassed by," Babington rejoined, but the professor had already turned away.

"You remember me, of course, Mrs. Tupper," he said. "Nicholas Lee. Your stepson and I used to break the branches of your cherry-trees regularly every summer."

"I remember," she answered, with a grim relish. "And I broke the branches again over your backs."

"Not always," he retorted, smiling at the thought of her furious and bootless sallies from the kitchen door. "I've no doubt we caused you endless trouble. If it isn't too late, I offer you my humble apologies here and now."

"I remember them both as very bad little boys," Mrs. Van Sant interposed.

"You put 'em up to it, and then sat on the fence and et the cherries," Mrs. Tupper declared. "Tomboy!"

She jerked out the last word with such energy that Mrs. Van Sant moved on in pretended panic, followed by her accomplice in theft.

They saw Plow laughing and talking in the midst of a group of athletes. The students never forgot that he had once been a famous baseball player, and even Fyffe's witty speeches could not win him a popularity greater than that of his stalwart rival. The professor left his admirers and came up to shake hands.

"I declare," said Mrs. Van Sant, tugging meditatively at her glove, "I scarcely feel respectable."

"Is it the company you keep? Plow asked, with a glance at Lee.

She barely heeded his jest. "I feel as if we were

a lot of horrid little children throwing sticks at some poor old woman and calling her names."

"I'm bound to say," Lee remarked, "that it was she who called us names."

"I saw she thought I intended to pick her pockets," Plow said, "so I took myself off. I'm not in this game." He looked over the great room, now crowded to the very doors. "The girls are giving this reception," he continued. "I don't see many of my esteemed colleagues here. This is the children's hour, as the poet said. I must be going."

He walked leisurely away with his firm, long step, his fine head and shoulders appearing above the crowd, a conspicuous and attractive figure.

Lee and Mrs. Van Sant were not slow to follow his example, for the reception had taken on the character of a young people's party.

Babington noted the gradual desertion of his faculty, but allowed no sign of his irritation to appear. Professor Fyffe's daughter, as a representative of one of the swell sororities, stood by his side as his assistant. She was a tall, willowy girl, dressed in white, and carried a long-stemmed American Beauty rose. Like her father, she had a great deal of manner and a keen sense of the ridiculous, and she contrived to let her friends understand her appreciation of the situation. She insisted upon shaking hands with the visitors sidewise and high in the air. Her manner was a constant irritant to old Kate, for she made no effort to conceal her knowledge of the social difference between herself and the guest of honor.

The reception was not the great triumph that Mrs. Tupper had anticipated. Her feet ached with weariness; she was conscious of the curiosity of the young people who surged about her. She divined that there was something amiss in her appearance and felt that the fact had been communicated to her in some occult way by the tall girl at her side.

"Isn't the music lovely to-day?" Miss Fyffe demanded. "I'm so fond of Mendelssohn's Frühlingslied, aren't you?"

"I don't understand your Greek and Latin," Mrs. Tupper rejoined, now thoroughly out of patience. "Plain English was good enough for girls when I was young."

"I mean the Spring Song," Miss Fyffe exclaimed with a touch of condescension. "Don't you think it's lovely?"

"Oh, the band! Why didn't you say so? I can't hear it with all the noise that's going on."

As the reception progressed, she grew more bewildered and irritated by the people she met whose ways were not her ways, and a realization of the impotence of her wealth to command respect filled her with deep resentment. The expression of her face became fierce, her remarks more inept. The gratitude of the students was chilled, and they felt sorry for their president as they divined his sufferings by the side of that grotesque figure. They had expected to see a kindly old lady who wished them well, and resented her evident and unexpected hostility. But the girls still insisted upon doing the honors of the occasion, and Babington was greatly

relieved when a bevy of them took her away to get some refreshments and to see the athletic trophies on the walls.

They fared but ill at her hands. Mrs. Tupper neither understood nor appreciated athletics, and took occasion to remark that the boys might be better employed than in knocking a baseball about a field, or in slugging each other in a football match. It seemed to the astonished students that she remembered every serious accident she had read in the papers during the past ten years. While she was in this mood an unlucky member of the football team was introduced to her.

"I know you!" she cried, glowering at him under her heavy brows. "You're the young man who set fire to my carriage. Don't say you didn't, for I saw you."

The athlete was so much amazed at this unjust accusation that he fled, without attempting a denial.

"I knew it!" she exclaimed. "That's what your football does."

She was highly pleased with this vindication of her prejudice.

"Go and tell Professor Babington that I want him to take me home at once," she commanded.

She had reached the limit of her endurance of "pawing" and "palavering." The president had never seen her in a worse humor. His own nerves were not in the best condition, but he braced himself for the ordeal of the drive to the capital. They had scarcely left the grounds before she broke forth.

"Who's this man Plow?" she demanded, hotly.

"Did you meet him this afternoon?" he asked, fencing for time.

"Yes, I did," she replied grimly; "and it's lucky for him that somebody came between us. I'd have given him a piece of my mind."

"I hope he hasn't done anything to offend you," he suggested.

"Now look here, Professor," she cried, "I'm not going to give any more money to a school that has anarchists on the faculty! I've been reading for some time what that man has been saying to working men."

"Surely, you don't mean anarchists," he protested soothingly. "Professor Plow is what we call a socialist. It's really quite a different thing."

"No, it ain't," she snapped. "It amounts to the same thing. If people like that had their way we'd all find ourselves murdered in our beds. I know them. That Plow of yours wants the workingmen to own all the street railways and gas companies and everything. What right have they got to them? Didn't Tupper build the first ones? Am I to hand over all my stock to a lot of anarchists who never did a thing to earn it? Do you think I'm going to stand by and hear the memory of my husband covered with mud? That's what it amounts to. He said private ownership of such things was robbery. That's what he said. Then I'm a robber, too, I suppose."

"These problems are being discussed a great deal

nowadays," he explained. "Of course, I don't agree with him—"

"Then why don't you turn him out? You're the boss."

He explained to her carefully the practical difficulty of doing what she demanded. It might raise a storm of indignation in the state. A similar case had occurred in another institution, and the papers had rung with abuse of the management. It was a question whether the university could afford to run the risk of antagonizing a large number of the taxpayers. The doctrines Plow taught were popular with the masses, and the professor himself had a large personal following. He added that such theories were not likely to be put into practice under present conditions, and that persecution only gave them greater vogue.

The light of battle blazed in her eyes.

"That man's got to go, or you don't get another cent from me," she declared. "I'm not going to give money to men who insult my husband's memory; not if I know it! I had intended to give you ten thousand for the books you're always talking about, but I won't do it now."

The president reflected a few moments. He weighed the immense gifts he might get from Mrs. Tupper and others who would follow her example, against the consequences of opposing the masses. Then his brow cleared and he turned to her with a smile.

"Mrs. Tupper, I think it can be managed. I don't approve of Plow's peculiar theories myself. I

think they are dangerous. They are chimerical and foster discontent. But I can't afford to give that as a reason for his dismissal. Some other reason must be assigned, and I have no doubt that he will furnish it himself before long. Socialism is one thing, and politics quite another. Plow is beginning to mix the two already, and I have no doubt that he will take an active part in the coming national campaign. We're not obliged to tolerate political partizanship in a professor of the State University. We shall have to wait a few months, but we can accomplish our purpose just as surely. You understand?"

She understood well enough, but the plan displeased her. It was not Tupper's way, and diplomacy made no appeal to her imagination. Her tantrum continued during the remainder of the drive, in spite of all his efforts. As he drew her shawl more closely about her against the evening coolness he wished that she were Mrs. Van Sant. She would appreciate the beauty of the scene,—the thin blades of green beginning to appear above the dark furrows of the plowed fields, the glint of the river that wound its way across the lowlands, the ridge of low hills in the distance, and the sunset clouds.

He recalled her as he had seen her for one brief, confused moment, but the picture of her face in his mind was not confused. He remembered that she had come with Lee, and wondered whether she were with him yet. Then he looked at the sullen, wrinkled face beside him, and commented wearily upon the beauty of the evening.

CHAPTER XI

ENIGMAS

During the month that followed Babington fully persuaded himself of the justice of his plan to rid the university of Professor Plow. It cost him more than one mental struggle to maintain his determination. He owed his present position in a large measure to Plow, but his old classmate had failed to support him since his arrival. He argued with himself that the question must be decided without regard to anything but the best interests of the university. All other considerations must be secondary to the welfare of the institution. He felt that men like the professor of political economy had no place in university life. He had no style, he was a fanatic, and his discussion of economic questions was colored by passion and prejudice. Such an attitude of mind was injurious to the young men in his classes. Thus the die was cast against his former friend, and only the occasion for action was left uncertain.

This was the plane on which he kept his reasoning, even to himself, but back of all these plausible arguments lay a personal motive, an emotion of growing intensity. Mrs. Van Sant's kindness to the professor was beginning to fill him with a fierce,

vindictive dislike of the man such as no mere difference of opinion could cause. He carried a picture in his mind that stung him, the picture of Plow towering beside her, holding her hand and looking at her with those magnetic eyes of his, while she smiled back, raising her face like an upturned flower. Compared with this picture, Lee's presence in that house seemed unimportant and could not stir his deeper emotions. He returned to his original opinion that there could be no romance between such good friends.

Mrs. Tupper finally consented to give the money for the books, in view of his promise that Plow should go in the summer or early fall. Her demands on his time became more and more exacting, and he began to feel that he earned by the sweat of his brow every cent he might get from her. She was captious if he failed to call as often as she wished, and he longed for the rest and relief of the coming vacation.

The day of commencement was the proudest of his life. Again the faculty appeared in all their regalia. The band played inspiring airs. The governor rode at the head of the procession of graduates and professors, accompanied by his escort of cavalry. He had been admitted to the University Club through Babington's efforts, and was to receive the degree of Doctor of Laws that day. His presence added éclat to the occasion. It was Babington who had brought him into Academe, together with that imposing band of horsemen, brilliant with gold braid, waving plumes, and clanking sabers.

The governor had used his influence with the legislature to appropriate forty thousand dollars for a house to be the permanent home of the president. He had paid well for his membership and degree.

The gymnasium had been enlarged to hold the throng and was packed with the wealth, the beauty, and the ability of the capital. To crown all, the graduating class was the largest in the history of the institution. The fact that the president was in love with Mrs. Van Sant invested him with a peculiar romance in the eyes of a certain set in the university crowd. They sympathized with his triumph, and hoped that she would make it complete.

There were several honorary degrees conferred that day, but the governor's called forth the greatest applause, an applause in which there was a note of jocularity and welcome that announced the final burying of the hatchet.

After the diplomas had been distributed the president came forward and made the best speech he had yet delivered. He traced the history of the university from its inception. He spoke of the loyalty and faith of those pioneers to whom it owed its origin. None among them entertained a more kindly interest than the late Mr. Lemuel Tupper, to whom the state owed so much. The president raised his hand in a graceful gesture as he outlined in glowing language the history of the late millionaire and made the stirring story the text for his advice to the young men before him. There were very few of the university constituents who were not proud of their president as he stood there clad in his silk robes, his

shoulders squared, his face alight with an infectious enthusiasm for high ideals.

It was by honesty, by frugality, by tireless energy, that the noble pioneer of whom he spoke had risen in the world and left behind him an inspiring example of American citizenship. What he had done they could do. He reminded them that virtue could never be exhausted, but, like a lamp, it ever kindled others. The example of a great man was like the beautiful torch-race among the ancient Greeks. It flashed through the darkness round about, passing from hand to hand. As he dwelt upon the picture, Mrs. Tupper, sitting near him on the platform, furbelowed, flushed with unwonted excitement, fanned herself violently, and smiled continually in a fever of nervous exultation.

Below him in the audience he saw the face of the woman he loved, and thrilled to think that he was winning her with every word. She was there to see his triumph, and he felt that to-morrow he would dare to claim his reward. It was her presence that fired his mind with its finest flashes of imagination.

Lastly, he paid a graceful tribute to Mrs. Tupper, the noble woman who had honored them by her presence that day. She had carried out the beneficent plan her husband's failing health had interrupted, and he was privileged to announce that she had crowned her first generous gift by handing him that very morning a check for ten thousand dollars, with which to buy books for the library.

A storm of applause arrested his speech. As he turned and bowed to Mrs. Tupper his eyes rested a

moment on Professor Plow, sitting at the extreme right of the platform, without an academic cap or gown, as if in defiance of the requirements of the occasion. The professor was leaning carelessly with one arm over the back of his chair, his large head bent forward, his unfathomable gaze fixed on Babington. It was a sad and reminiscent look, as if he were thinking with what other emotions he had listened to the president's first speech in Argos.

Babington turned again to face the audience. His hand trembled as he steadied it on the table at his side. He felt flouted and scorned by that steady gaze, which seemed to look through him and beyond. With an effort he regained his equipoise, and his voice rang out once more.

"Young men, give Mrs. Tupper one of your college cheers. Give it with a will. Let her see that you appreciate what she has done for your *alma mater!*"

A senior sitting in the front row arose and faced his classmates. He was the appointed leader of the cheering at athletic contests, and now he beat time with his newly acquired diploma. The roar that responded to the signal shook the building. There was a triple cheer, with a "tiger" at the end. The wave of handclapping that swept over the audience afterward sounded like gentle rain among the leaves by comparison.

The blessing was pronounced by a prominent Protestant bishop of the state, and the great throng melted away.

Thus the curtain dropped on the first act in the

drama of Babington's presidency, and left him bowing before the footlights.

On the following morning he took his way happily across the campus to Mrs. Van Sant's. His standing in that house entitled him to the privilege of making a morning call, especially as it was to be a call of farewell for the summer. He was conscious of a pleasurable excitement as he walked up the smooth flagstones that led from the street to her door. Whenever he put foot in her yard he felt that he was treading on enchanted ground. Everything seemed to catch a peculiar charm from her; the flower-beds, the trees, the restful stretches of lawn, the vine-wreathed Colonial doorway, with its suggestion of beauty and exclusiveness.

The president was in a conquering mood. The triumph of the day before still filled him with exaltation. At the regents' meeting in the evening everything had gone as he wished. He had obtained the permission and the means to add to the faculty, and was about to go east for that purpose. His scheme for the closer amalgamation of the professional schools in the city was approved. Judge Gates had gone off to Europe since the previous meeting a month before. Babington reflected with satisfaction that the judge would be absent a year, and that he had pacified him by a ready acquiescence in his wish concerning Lee. Mrs. Van Sant had witnessed his triumph, and he felt that something delicious, something thrilling, might happen when he should stand with her behind those shadowed windows. Yesterday, in the full flush of his excite-

ment, he had resolved to ask her to be his wife, but now he considered the possibility with the caution of a man that has put a high value on himself in the matrimonial market for a number of years.

He found the furniture in the drawing-room covered with brown Holland, and the mirrors draped. She was a long time coming. The fifteen minutes seemed to his impatient mind an hour, while he listened to the steady ticking of the clock on the mantel, and to the clatter of wagons passing in the street. He looked through the open folding doors into the room beyond. There, too, the furniture was draped. He seemed to be in a storage warehouse, rather than in the home with which he associated so much charm and beauty. But when she came toward him, wending her way through the shadows, the illusion was dispelled, and her presence made the place once more her own.

She was dressed in white, with a collar and belt of pink, and her arms were bare to her elbows. She seemed a personification of summer coolness and ease, a holiday spirit.

"You see me staff in hand," she cried gaily, "ready to depart. Robert went this morning on a surveying trip in the mountains, and I'm off for California to-morrow to visit some of my beloved relatives. When do you go?"

"To-morrow, too," he replied, "but in the other direction. I must be in Philadelphia for a meeting of the Ethnological Society. I wish Philadelphia were in California."

"How ridiculous that would be," she said, laugh-

ing. "Suppose you had an Aladdin's lamp and were to rub it and wish Philadelphia in California. How surprised the Quakers would be when they awoke in the morning and discovered where they were! What part of California would you put them in?"

"Where the 'beloved relatives' are," he suggested.

She considered the proposition seriously a moment.

"But that would be impossible," she objected, "because the relatives are on Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay, in a military post. There wouldn't be room for a handful of them. Besides, how inappropriate to plant a colony of Quakers in a citadel of war. They wouldn't be allowed entrance."

"Are letters allowed entrance?" he inquired, "even if they are not warlike?"

"Sometimes, if they're not too numerous. But the atmosphere of the place is distinctly belligerent. One has to be cautious."

"That's too bad," he said, his face glowing with enjoyment of their absurd enigmas. "I had thought the war was over."

"Not at all. It's only just begun." She felt that the retort was rather dangerous, and hurried on.

"Come and see how lovely it is on my side veranda. I declare, I almost hate to leave it for less attractive places. I should like to sit there with a novel all summer long."

As they passed out on the veranda she continued: "I want to ask your advice about a very important matter." Babington leaned against the railing and looked at her expectantly, while she stood

before him with a perplexed and judicial expression. "I have just sent a letter to a friend," she explained, "in which I said that the furniture was already covered and beginning to 'hibernate.' At the time I thought it a rather fine-sounding word, but afterward it flashed into my mind that I had made an awful mistake. What could I have been thinking of?"

"Bears, I'm sure," he answered, much amused. "Probably you were thinking of Robert's trip to the mountains, and that naturally suggested bears."

"That's it, undoubtedly, but if I explain that to my friend she'll never believe me. She used to be a school teacher, and is very superior."

"You might telegraph to her before she gets the letter," he suggested. "Something like this: 'For *hibernate* in my letter, read *aestivate*.'"

"Splendid!" she cried. "I'll do it. How resourceful you are! I never should have thought of it."

Babington had often felt himself in peculiar harmony with Mrs. Van Sant, but their conversation had never before verged so near to delicate and elusive intimacy. In that green seclusion they played the game with a dexterity they both found fascinating. Sometimes she seemed to allow him a glimpse of her inmost mind, and there was one fleeting moment when he felt that he could almost have kissed her. He lost the opportunity, if opportunity it were, and when it was gone she was quite another person. She made him talk seriously about the Ethnological Society, as if there were nothing that interested her

more. Presently the pendulum swung back again, and she rallied him about Mrs. Tupper.

"Remember what old Mr. Weller said: 'Beware of vidows, Samivel.' I believe old Kate is setting her cap for you."

He reddened and laughed in real embarrassment. Suddenly she broke into a ripple of merriment. He was whirled away by her fascination, and the genuineness of his emotion make him awkward.

"You don't seem one," he broke out. "You seem the goddess of this grotto."

She saw what she had brought on herself and retreated down the steps, out into the sunny lawn. He followed, breathing quickly, determined. They were in full view of the street, and she felt safe. Still, the situation called for desperate measures.

"Aren't you ashamed to pay me such hackneyed compliments?" she demanded, clasping her hands behind her back, and looking up at him steadily. "Professor Plow never pays me compliments. He knows I'm not a goddess, but just a very perverse and cross-grained mortal. That's why I warned you to beware of me."

At the reference to Plow he winced as if struck, and she felt that she had been actually cruel. She saw that he was racked by jealousy and discomfiture, and she could not tell him how causeless his jealousy was. But the reference to the professor had served her purpose. No doubt the president had shared the general impression that she was merely waiting for the word to fall into his arms. He

knew now that the war was only begun, and she thought it would do him good. In that moment of silence between them Mrs. Everett's voice was heard calling from the veranda.

"Susanne, where are you? Oh!"

Mrs. Van Sant ran up the steps and embraced her friend with unusual warmth. The president followed slowly. He was not in an amiable mood, and his natural aversion to Mrs. Everett was not diminished by her inopportune appearance. He never understood how Mrs. Van Sant could endure her. There was no escape, and he greeted her with what courtesy he could command. Her conversation was an irritant to his shaken nerves, and he found it increasingly difficult to be civil.

Mrs. Everett divined in some mysterious way that Susanne wished her to remain. As the president saw that she did not intend to go, he struggled to recover his suavity, and watched for the psychological moment to depart.

"Wait a moment," his hostess entreated, as he rose to go. "Would you do a little favor for me?"

"Certainly," he replied, with restraint.

She went into the house and left him in doubt as to the nature of the favor she meant to ask.

"Lovely out here, isn't it?" Mrs. Everett remarked, by way of punctuating the silence that had fallen between them.

"Very," he replied. "Mrs. Van Sant was just saying that she hated to leave it. She was tempted to stay here all summer and read novels."

They were discussing summer resorts and getting along smoothly when Mrs. Van Sant returned with a paper in her hand.

"That telegram we were talking about," she explained. "If you happen to be passing the office, I should be ever so much obliged."

The old footing was reëstablished as by magic. She had only been teasing him, he thought, and this was a sign of her repentance. If he had not advanced in her regard he certainly had not lost ground. Another time he would speak, but she had shown him that the time was not yet.

"And here's the money," she added.

He hesitated a moment, and then took the coin from her hand. They parted gaily, with many good wishes for a pleasant summer. He walked across the lawn and passed through the side gate.

"Don't forget the telegram!" she called out after him.

"I won't!" he shouted, waving his hat in farewell.

When he was gone the two friends made the circuit of the yard, talking of various things. Mrs. Van Sant drew a pink rose through her belt, and wished she had thought to do so before.

"And I never told him how well he spoke his piece yesterday," she remarked. "He must think me very unappreciative."

They had not been speaking of Babington, but Mrs. Everett was not surprised. She had been thinking with humiliation that she could not escape the consciousness of the president's official superiority to her husband.

CHAPTER XII

A JOLLY GOOD FELLOW

There was a rush in the hallway of the building in which the Ethnological Society was holding its meeting when Babington's fine figure loomed in the door. He was quite thrust into a corner by the enthusiasm of his friends. His face appeared tossing above the little group, laughing and jovial. His silk hat was thrust back almost boyishly from his forehead.

"Hello, fellows!" he cried. "Jones, Parton, Griggs, how are you?"

"They seem to be treating you well out there," remarked the president of an eastern university. "Come here and let us get a good look at you. You haven't grown thinner. However, I wouldn't trade. You still have to come east for some things."

The remark concerning Babington's appearance was justified, for the expanse of his white waistcoat had noticeably increased during the year, and now thrust his shining Phi Beta Kappa key into nearer view. His full throat gave promise of a double chin in the years to come, but his eyes were bright and his step elastic. He was still a young man, and he enjoyed the game of life with a fresh-

ness of feeling that constituted his chief charm in the eyes of those who had no cause to wish him ill.

"I have to come east for some things, do I?" he retorted. "I guess we can show you a thing or two ourselves. We'll have you all out to visit us some summer. 'Westward the star of empire holds its way.' This part of the country isn't America. We're thinking of making a present of you to England."

A burst of laughter greeted this sally.

"Why didn't you bring Plow with you?" some one asked.

Plow was not a member of the Ethnological Society, and the president suspected that a secret shaft lay concealed in the question. It was not unlikely that rumors of his trouble with his professor of political economy had reached the east, but he had come prepared for that.

"Plow is a very busy man," he replied. "He takes no time for recreation. He's one of the most valuable men we have in the university."

"I see by the papers that he's preaching against the trusts," said another.

"Just a harmless hobby," Babington remarked confidentially.

"You haven't become a convert?" the eastern president suggested, with a twinkle in his eyes. Babington seemed to swell almost imperceptibly, as was his wont when about to utter a sententious remark.

"I'm not a politician. I don't talk my political opinions; I vote them. That's all I'm called upon

to do. But if Plow feels called upon to do otherwise, that's his concern. Whether I may agree with him or not doesn't matter. He's a valuable man, the kind of man who can go on a lecturing tour and bring back a whole girdle of scalps to the university."

The group broke up, and a reporter that had lurked unobserved within earshot hurried off to his paper. The national campaign was now well under way, and it was the fashion to quote the opinions of college presidents.

Babington paced about the halls that morning with more than his usual complacency. He attended the reading of some papers to which he gave indifferent attention. In fact, they interested him very little. He could use the society now for other purposes than the acquisition of technical knowledge. As the readers droned on he sat thinking of his own concerns. He hoped his praise of Plow might result in the extraction of that thorn from his flesh; in other words, that the professor of political economy might be called to an eastern chair. If he could accomplish Mrs. Tupper's command in this way it would be better for all concerned.

It gave him no little satisfaction to reflect that in his praise of Plow he had not indorsed the professor's opinions. He had no definite opinion in regard to the Democratic platform, except that it was championed by a disreputable army of cranks, and by the discontented and vulgar generally. The state in which Argos was situated seemed about evenly divided on the questions at issue in the

contest. He could not forecast the result of the election as yet. An ounce of present silence was worth a pound of future explanation.

His sympathies were really with the administration, and the "imperialism" of which its enemies made such a scarecrow was rather to his liking. There was a glamour and a glory and a good deal of dress parade connected with it. He felt that the tendencies of the times made it necessary to drive the hewers of wood and drawers of water in harness. He would like to be one of the men to crack the whip.

It was thus that he missed the ideal of a State University. He preached one thing, he felt another. He wanted his university to grow and extend its influence and become a great educational trust, because he was at the head of it. He favored the aspirations of the vulgar for his own aggrandizement, but he loved to belong to the privileged few and took a secret satisfaction in the thought that he was not a graduate of a state or co-educational institution.

As he sat in the convention of scholars he knew that he was a figure of unusual importance. On the map of the country he mentally pegged out certain big men who were dominant in their own sections. In the White House was the president of the United States; on the bench of the supreme court sat the chief justice; in New York was a famous Episcopal bishop; in New England a great university president; in various sections various

"kings" or "barons" of this or that gigantic industry; and in Argos dwelt President Babington.

To a certain extent he was right. Constant readers of newspapers were beginning to locate him, for his name had been widely advertised during the year. His private secretary had circulated his quotable opinions with great skill. Babington was a long name, and reverberated afar. Those at the center of the detonation, disillusioned by propinquity, might call it a sham battle, but to the listeners at a distance the echo was as formidable as if the guns were loaded with solid shot.

That evening he took the president of the eastern college to dinner and talked to such good purpose that he got him to promise Plow a professorship. Before going to bed he sent the professor a telegram apprising him of the fact, and then went to sleep with a feeling that the difficulty was solved. Doubtless Plow would understand that he had no choice but to accept. He certainly ought to realize that he had been treated better than he deserved. The president felt that he had made a magnanimous return for his subordinate's disloyal criticisms. So much he would do for the sake of their former friendship.

The next morning he was annoyed to find himself quoted in a prominent paper as having, by his praise of Plow, declared in favor of his party. He restrained his first impulse to publish a denial, moved by the reflection that if the report reached Argos it would be acceptable to at least half the

state, and perhaps to the majority. His freedom from political partizanship was well known. Moreover, a denial might be construed as implying that he had come out for trusts and imperialism. On the whole, it seemed better to let the matter pass, and to pose as a good-natured victim of unscrupulous newspaper enterprise.

The last day of the session was reserved for a paper on the Chinese by the president of the State University at Argos. The popular interest aroused in the far East by the Spanish war removed the subject from the strictly academic sphere, and the specialists were almost crowded from the hall by the influx of the general public. It began to seem but a step from Manila to Peking, though none could foresee how soon that step would be taken because of the boxers' attack on the foreign legations.

Babington saw his opportunity and his peril. What diplomatic position might not come to him, if his remarks attracted the attention and won the approval of the president of the United States? On the other hand, he must avoid offending a possible majority of the constituents of his university by an open advocacy of the policy of national expansion. Jason did not sail more cleverly between the dangerous Symplegades than Babington between the opposing rocks of political prejudice. He touched lightly, humorously, upon the national dilemma. He did not venture an opinion in regard to the justice of the seizure of the Philippine Islands, but he accepted the fact with buoyant resignation.

Then he turned an eye on "the pages of history," and drew wise lessons from the failures and successes of the Greeks and Romans in their schemes of colonization. It was in this part of his speech that he threw his bread on the waters in the hope that it might return to him again.

When he had lingered in Philippine waters sufficiently long for his purpose he set sail for China, his ostensible destination. But here he made no effort to be profound. He was a specialist whose written work was known. He therefore adopted a familiar and anecdotal vein. He played about the subject, he looked in upon it quizzically, or digressed into passages of eloquent description.

The effort was a treat to the hearers and a joy to the reporters. But a few careful and unmagnetic scholars wondered resentfully that such light talk could make such a stir, while their own laborious researches created no ripple and went quietly to their tomb in the learned records of the society.

That night the professors were college boys once more. Safe from public scrutiny in the cool, subterranean *Rathskeller,* they drank German beers from capacious mugs and laid aside the dignity of Academe. Tables were thrust companionably together. Tobacco smoke floated in eddying clouds through the room, driven by the breeze whipped from the whirring electric fans. Snatches of songs in German and Latin punctuated impromptu speeches. *Ich weiss nicht was soll es bedeuten* and *Gaudeamus igitur* arose in emulous rivalry.

Babington was elected president of the society for the ensuing year. The steins clattered on the oaken tables and cries of "Speech! speech!" broke forth on on all sides.

Babington was on his feet in response to the demand, beaming down on his friends, and waiting for silence. But the room was in confusion. Waiters hurried to and fro; men talked in groups and were slow to stop even for the pleasure of listening to the new president. He was equal to the situation.

"Gentlemen!" he cried, "we're not here to listen to speeches. This is what we came for. *Prosit!*" He raised his mug to his lips and drained it to the bottom.

There was undeniable relief in the applause that greeted him as he resumed his seat. Again the mugs thumped noisily, and the thanks of his comrades came gratefully to his ears in the familiar refrain:

For he's a jolly good fellow,
Which nobody can deny!

CHAPTER XIII

A MATCHING OF WITS

Mrs. Tupper was ill when Babington returned to Argos early in September. He sent her flowers, and a note of sympathetic inquiry in which he begged the privilege of paying his respects in person as soon as her health should permit. Her illness was a godsend to him at that time, for his first fortnight at home was crowded with cares and anxieties. He longed for the relief of a chat with Mrs. Van Sant, but she had not yet returned.

After the Philadelphia meeting he ventured to send her a letter, and a reply came in due time. The letter was so like herself that he answered it at some length and with obvious warmth. Then followed a silence between them which he could not break. He assigned coquetry, rather than displeasure, as the cause, and awaited her arrival with impatience.

The alterations of the large mansion, which had been purchased for him in the spring, were nearly completed. Argos, like so many other towns, had its "folly," and "Philbrook's folly," a deserted home for broken-down actors, had long stood awaiting a purchaser until the board of regents secured it for the president.

The term had not yet begun, and the duties that

claimed his attention were apparently innumerable. Many things that he had ordered to be done were not finished. It seemed to his impatient nature that everything devolved upon him alone, that he must push here and drive there unceasingly to keep the huge machinery of the university in running order. The contrast between his present position and the easy glories of his vacation was a constant trial, and he found the harness of office even more galling than before. He had enjoyed visiting eastern universities and interviewing new men in regard to faculty positions in Argos. The eagerness of young doctors of philosophy to come was gratifying, and he had secured several at his own terms.

Babington's nature was fundamentally pleasure-loving. It was because success was the pleasantest thing in the world to him that he had endured toil to win it; but now that toil was becoming distasteful. He hated detail, and matters of detail were forced on his attention at every turn.

The great campaign was drawing to a close. Plow had refused the eastern professorship, and was stumping the state in the interests of his political hero. His curt refusal had put Babington in an awkward position with the eastern president, whom he had persuaded with difficulty to take the professor. This was another score to be wiped out in the final reckoning, and Babington bided his time. He had told Mrs. Tupper that political partizanship in a professor of a state university was sufficient cause for removal; but if the Democrats

should triumph in November, what then? He must await the event.

The personality of the professor loomed more and more threatening as the din of the political battle swelled toward its climax. It would not do to make a popular hero of him by a summary dismissal, yet he knew that Mrs. Tupper expected him to keep his promise. Should he obey her command and defy public opinion, or side with the many? He saw the necessity of straddling the fence until he should find out what the opinion of the many might be. Meanwhile, he thanked his lucky star for the illness of Mrs. Tupper, which postponed the day of explanation.

One sultry afternoon a reporter gained admittance to the president's office. He was sitting at his desk when he heard what seemed to be a scuffle at the door, and the next moment a large and handsome woman, dressed in white, walked triumphantly past the defeated Watkins.

"It's all right," he heard her say. "You needn't go to see whether he's in. I'll find out for myself, and save you the trouble."

She took a chair, uninvited, directly fronting the desk, and announced herself in a fresh, strong voice: "Miss Wiley, of *The Times*. I just dropped in to get a short article on your eastern trip."

The president knew Miss Wiley very well by reputation, but had never seen her before. Fyffe had told him that the thinly veiled hostility of *The Times* was due to this woman. In her senior year at the

university she had barely failed to receive the gold medal for high scholarship. The prize had gone to a man, and she was firmly convinced that the award was based on sex rather than merit. For this reason she hated her *alma mater,* or rather, the faculty, and never lost an opportunity to ridicule the men who had robbed her of her just deserts.

As far as Babington was concerned, it was sufficient to arouse her dislike that he was a man; but if he had been peculiarly favorable toward the women students she might have relented. In spite of his efforts to appear impartial, however, the impression was early disseminated that he regarded the presence of women in the university almost as an intrusion. In a hundred little ways, to be felt rather than described, he had shown his indifference to them; and Miss Wiley was one of the first to learn of his attitude.

How she had gained such influence with *The Times* as to be allowed to air her opinions on the editorial page was a question that gave birth to a hint of scandal. Professor Fyffe knew who wrote those breezy paragraphs about the "bibulous propensities of a certain eminent scientist connected with the State University," and perhaps he honestly thought that a woman who could stoop to such underhand methods could do anything. Babington was not inclined to attach much weight to Fyffe's innuendoes, and guessed correctly that Miss Wiley's influence on *The Times* was not due to the favor of the editor, but to the policy of sensation that the paper fostered. As he looked at her now, un-

deniably handsome, business-like, shrewd, mopping her wholesome countenance with a violet-scented, freshly laundered handkerchief, his spirits sank before her confident bearing.

"I'm a graduate of the university myself," she continued, "class of ninety-three, and, of course, am particularly interested in university news. Are there to be any new professors this term?"

The president gave her a budget of considerable interest and volume, and when he had finished he fumbled with the papers on his desk to convey a hint that he regarded the interview at an end. But she was not to be thus dismissed.

"What do you think of the present political campaign?" she asked squarely. "Your views on the subject at this time would be of great interest to the public."

Babington answered slowly, weighing his words.

"My opinion on that subject can be of no particular interest to the public. It is my business to run the university to the best of my ability, and my opinion on political matters is of no more value than another's. When the time comes to vote I shall cast my ballot as I see fit. As president of the State University, I feel that it is not incumbent upon me to preach political doctrines. I have all I can do to attend to my legitimate duties."

He replaced his glasses on his nose, and began to turn over his papers once more.

"Professor Plow is evidently of a different opinion," she remarked, cheerful and indomitable as ever. "He doesn't seem to feel that his connection

with the university is a bar to the free expression of his opinion on these matters."

"Professor Plow's methods are his own," Babington retorted, stung to anger by a sudden realization of the trouble Plow's obstinacy had brought upon him. The color mounted to his face, and his eyes flashed. Miss Wiley was calm and interested. Only her tightened grasp on her pencil indicated the excitement of the hunter that has struck the trail.

"Then his methods lack your approval?" she queried. "There has been an impression abroad that he voices your opinions. The public would be glad to be set right."

The president's irritation and excitement increased at a bound.

"My opinions! I never told him my opinions! We never discussed these questions. How in heaven's name could such an impression get abroad?"

As his irritation increased her smile became more friendly and bland.

"About a year ago, I believe, you sent Professor Plow to speak in your place before a labor union, and in your letter to the union you said that he represented your opinions. His attitude at that meeting, and since then, has been hostile to trusts."

The president gasped with astonishment. Then he spoke with a certain dignity of indignation.

"That letter was merely a general expression of confidence. I was very busy at the time, and perhaps did not weigh each phrase. As a matter of

fact, I did not know then just what Mr. Plow's opinions were."

She opened her eyes in apparent wonder, and continued relentlessly: "The public had heard that you and Professor Plow were old friends, had been classmates in college, and so they naturally inferred that you were acquainted with his views. Since then, you were quoted as approving his lecture tours, at the convention in Philadelphia."

"Not quoted, but misquoted," he returned, squaring his jaw at her belligerently. "Whatever I may have said at that time, I did not say a word that could be construed as an expression of approval of his peculiar doctrines. I merely remarked that, as a general thing, an able lecturer in the faculty reflects great credit upon the university."

He felt that he had extricated himself neatly from the dilemma, and his stare conveyed an opinion of his questioner that was far from complimentary. But she was more keen than he had supposed.

"It was apropos of these political lecture tours of Professor Plow's that the remark was made, was it not? You said, if I remember rightly, that he brought back a whole 'girdle of scalps' to the university. However, from what you say to-day, I infer that you have changed your mind, and do not approve of a professor in a state university preaching party politics."

Babington saw that he was caught. Her Socratic method had driven him into a corner, and he did not know which way to turn. There was something peculiarly mortifying, also, in the reappearance of the

phrase, "a girdle of scalps." He had thought it rather fine at first, and had used it several times. Now it seemed ridiculous. He had an absurd vision of Plow prancing back to Argos like a wild Indian, his tomahawk raised aloft, a girdle of scalps flopping about his waist. He arose to his feet in a wrathful panic.

"Miss Wiley," he cried, "I am not aware that I am on the witness-stand before you. You will have to excuse me. I am very busy with university matters and can not stop now to discuss politics. In regard to Professor Plow, I have nothing to say, nothing whatever. I wish you good day."

She faced him imperturbably, though aching inwardly with suppressed laughter.

"Very well, Mr. President, I shall remember. Thank you very much for your courtesy. Good afternoon."

When the door closed behind her, Babington turned on Watkins.

"Mr. Watkins," he said, white with passion, "if this ever occurs again, I'll—"

"I couldn't help it, sir," the poor fellow stammered. "She was a lady—"

"A lady!" Babington echoed scornfully. He vented his emotions in a short, ugly little laugh, and walked up and down the room, fuming. He was made ridiculous. He had been bullied and worsted by a servant of yellow journalism. His dignity was punctured, and he had come to earth. It was impossible for him to settle down again to his correspondence. He seized his hat and strode from the

room, giving Watkins a black look as he passed. Even in that moment of profound irritation with his secretary, he was too well aware of the young man's usefulness to think of discharging him.

During the next two hours he made the delinquent janitors and carpenters uncomfortable. Only fear of a possible strike and of further complications with labor unions prevented him from discharging some of them on the spot; and he felt more than ever exasperated when he thought of their impudent assurance. It was with such fellows, he reflected, that Plow hobnobbed, and naturally, since he belonged to their class.

As Babington thought over the interview more calmly, he became convinced that Plow was working against him in the dark. How did *The Times* get hold of that letter in which he indorsed the professor's opinions? Had Plow something to do with it? Even at that early date had he begun a still hunt against his president, expecting an inevitable breach between them, and getting ready his weapons of war? Was he trying to court discipline that he might play the martyr, and perhaps become president of the university himself? No wonder he had refused the call east!

The president felt that he suddenly had a new insight into the character of his former friend. He saw now behind the mask of that inscrutable gaze. He remembered the incident at commencement. That look meant hatred and jealousy, if it meant anything. Then a picture of Mrs. Van Sant rose before him, as she stood in the brilliant June sun-

light in her garden, her chin upraised, her bright eyes looking straight into his, her fine hair an aureole.

"Professor Plow never pays me compliments. He knows I'm not a goddess, but just a very perverse and cross-grained mortal."

How often he had recalled that delicious self-characterization! But why should Plow know anything about her, or think about her at all? He shook with a cruel fury to imagine that the professor's great hands might ever be laid on her in love. The thought that she had not answered his second letter filled his cup of emotion to overflowing. It was fortunate that Plow was away. Had he met the president on the campus that afternoon he might have received his *congé* then and there.

CHAPTER XIV

OIL ON THE WATERS

When Mrs. Tupper read *The Times* the following morning she recovered abruptly from her illness. Sometimes great joy bids an invalid take up his bed and walk; sometimes a sense of duty, or a realization of danger, will accomplish the cure. In Mrs. Tupper's case the propelling power was profound irritation. She felt that she could not die while such things were happening, or, as she idiomatically expressed it, "while there was such goings on."

Miss Wiley's interview with the president was accorded a prominent place in the paper, and made further conspicuous by heavy headlines. *The Times* that morning was a kind of electric battery dealing at least two readers a series of shocks, but in Babington's heart the hot waves of anger were succeeded by cold drenches of dismay. He turned from the account of the interview to the editorial page, and there his worst fears were realized. Under the heading, Janus Babington and Daniel Plow, his inconsistency, as contrasted with Plow's honesty, was mercilessly exposed. The article was clever and satiric from beginning to end. The

president's letter to the labor union was printed verbatim, and his efforts to explain it away were riddled with vindictive delight. Babington's spirits sank as he reflected that this was probably only the first broadside of an attack that would be continuous.

He must make his peace with the Fairy Godmother for failing to send the professor about his business. In his extremity he wrote her a little note, in which the sole message was solicitude for her health, and sent it by a messenger boy, together with a box of roses from the greenhouse. The boy passed another about midway bearing winged words from Mrs. Tupper to the president.

Babington was in his office, about eleven o'clock, when the letter came. He tore it open nervously and gazed on what appeared at first sight to be the record of a seismograph, so stormy were the emotions that had driven the writer's pen. At last he made out the following summons:

Professor what in the Name of Common sence is the matter with You to let a fool Reporter mix you all up so you dont know what your saying and why dont you fire that man Plow as you say you would. if you come over this afternoon I can give you some good advice. *Mrs. Tupper.*

As soon as he had recovered sufficiently from the shock of this note he penned a brief reply, congratulating Mrs. Tupper upon her recovery, and promising to call at four o'clock.

There were certain things that the president unconsciously used to supply the lack of moral courage and spiritual equipoise. Many times he found the proprieties of life a rampart, from which he could look down on the world with comparative serenity. As he mounted his horse that afternoon he appreciated the advantage of the man that rides over the man on foot. There was something exhilarating in throwing his leg over a fine animal, in straightening up in the stirrups, in the wider view of the landscape thus obtained, and, above all, in the quiver of a spirited creature beneath him whose spirit, however strong, was yet mastered every moment by his own.

There was an additional satisfaction in the knowledge that his clothes were what a horseman's should be. In spite of his size and weight, he sat well, and no one could think him awkward or ungainly. As he cantered through Argos, returning salutations with the butt of his whip and keeping his horse well in hand, the spectators who had chuckled over the morning papers were made to feel that the attack was futile, even ridiculous. It seemed now to be mere newspaper talk, the spleen of yellow journalism. Even those whose knowledge of the man had made them swear that the report of the interview was deliciously accurate now felt, for a moment, that it might have been retouched. But when he had passed by they returned to their original opinion, wondering resentfully at the unfair influence of his presence.

Babington turned over in his mind the arguments

by which he intended to pacify old Kate. He was not without resentment that she should presume so far; and yet the woman that had penned that illiterate letter on cheap, ruled paper could write checks of fabulous worth. In her he saw his opportunity. Her gifts to the university had enabled him to finish his first year at Argos in a blaze of glory, and succeeding benefactions would hush the murmurs against his large salary and the complaints in regard to the mansion he was rebuilding for himself with the money of the state.

Immersed in these thoughts he cantered up the avenue of maples, now beginning to take on the first rich tints of autumn coloring, and tied his horse to the little iron negro at the front steps.

A new maid came to the door and directed him to the parlor, into which he had first entered through the window. The rehabilitation of the house was now complete, and no trace remained of that gradual decay that had given the place its only claim to interest and romance. Everything was glaringly new, and as he walked restlessly up and down, awaiting Mrs. Tupper's arrival, he fancied the odor of varnish in the air. He anticipated a stormy interview, and whipped his leg nervously as he stopped in his walk to look at the face of the redoubtable Tupper. The painted eyes looked back at him coldly, scornfully, and he turned away uneasily, as from a living presence.

Mrs. Tupper was standing in the doorway, bobbing, smiling, one of the roses he had sent her that morning fluttering at her breast. He almost cried

out in astonishment at the sight. An impression of feebleness and age was intensified, rather than relieved, by the bright flower and by the patches of powder on her face. She put her hand on the side of the door, as if for support. As he hurried forward to greet her he saw, not the termagant he had feared, but a feeble old woman, grotesquely gay, lifting a glance of feminine appeal for approval! There was both pity and repulsion in his heart as he took her hand.

"How do you do?" he said kindly. "But I needn't ask. I never saw you looking better." She fluttered into a chair.

"You never saw me looking worse," she retorted, crimson. "That's what you thought the minute you set eyes on me. Don't tell me; I know. Old Kate Tupper ain't altogether a fool yet."

"I hope you don't mean to imply that you expect to become one soon," he returned.

She loved a quick reply, and her wintry smile rewarded him.

"If I took lessons from some folks I wouldn't have to expect very long," she remarked pointedly.

"You mean me, of course," he returned. His old sense of power over her had come back, now that he saw her again. He launched into a smooth explanation of the manner in which he had been misrepresented by Miss Wiley. She looked at him steadily, but did not appear to follow his remarks with attention. Suddenly she startled him by interrupting in a kind of fury.

"The hussy! Haven't I heard of her? But you

ain't a bit smart." She looked at him in pity, taking his part against the other woman. "I could have managed her," she declared grimly.

Nothing she had ever said to him had been more disconcerting. She did not credit his explanation. She knew that Miss Wiley had outwitted him, and she raged against her for her superior cleverness. He was keenly humiliated to realize that this old beldam would fain spread out her skirts to screen him from a discerning world.

"Thank you," he said, drawing himself up with offended dignity.

"I guess I don't express myself very well," she explained. He found her sudden feminine humility more trying than any burst of temper. "You're smart enough in some ways, lots smarter than old Tupper up there used to be. He didn't have book learning, but he could manage reporters. He just told them to go to the devil, and slammed the door in their faces. When a man gave him any trouble he kicked him out. I used to hear him say, 'If you don't kick a man out when he begins to get uppish he'll kick you out; so you'd better get in your kick first.' Now there's that anarchist, Plow. If you knew what he was up to, you'd do what you promised to last spring. You'd give him his walking papers quick."

"You mean he wants to be president of the university himself? I've thought of that."

"That's it," she cried. "I knew you wasn't so dumb. You've read what he said in one of his

speeches—what a university ought to be. What does he mean by that?"

"That he could run it better than I," he answered.

"Just so. Then why don't you turn him out? That's what I say." She struck the arm of her chair in a spasm of irritation.

"I got him a call to an eastern college, and he refused it. Of course, he'll have to go sooner or later, but I think we'd better wait until after the election. He's more popular in the state than you realize, and I don't want to give him any satisfaction by making a martyr of him."

"You're too good to him," she said, her eyes full of chiding admiration. "He didn't accept it, didn't he? Perhaps he had sense enough to know that they wouldn't keep him long. They don't want a firebrand in those colleges. I'll tell you what it is, Professor; you're afraid of talk. It don't do near as much harm as you think it does. People don't concern themselves about a man that's out of a job. They've got their own affairs to think of. If you kicked him out you'd find that people would respect you for it. I ain't going to wear myself out talking about it to you any more. You know I mean what I say. You don't get another cent for your college until that man goes."

The spicy quality of her last declaration was a relief. Anything was preferable to the hint of romance that had given him such distress.

"You'll take a drink before you go back," she

said, as he rose. "I need one myself." He pulled the bell-rope for her.

"I'll have anything in my house," she continued, "but one of those electric buzzers. You might just as well sit in the death-chair and be done with it."

Babington laughed at the reappearance of the familiar prejudice, and the atmosphere was cleared for the remainder of his call. Over the toddies she grew reminiscent.

"It's the same Tupper used to keep," she remarked, "though he never drunk much of it himself. It was more in his line to give it to other men till he had them where he wanted them. He was that smart, they never found him out; but I did. I've seen him sell many a gold brick to English investors over this stuff. He hadn't no opinion of the English. He always told them he'd let them in on the ground floor, instead of which he dropped them into the cellar."

Babington joined easily in her chuckle over the villainies of the departed Tupper, whom he had so eloquently eulogized at the previous commencement.

"Those old fellows weren't troubled much with a conscience," he remarked. The comment was rather admiring than condemnatory.

"Not much," she assented. "What's the use? You can't go far if you get tangled up in your conscience every step. Conscience is mostly hunting for fine words to excuse yourself with, anyway. I learned that at church, when I used to go. There wasn't much some of those deacons wasn't into, I can tell you. But Tupper called a spade a spade.

He went into the legislature and bought it up, like a man would peanuts on the street. And when he got the railroad through he made the farmers pay for it. That's why they hated him. But how would they ever have got their grain and cattle to market if he hadn't built them a railroad, I'd like to know? They ought to have paid for it. Now, men like Plow want me to give up my stock to a lot of loafers who never done a thing but talk. Fools!"

Babington sipped his toddy and moralized.

"It's always easy to throw stones at the great men who do things. The great things would never get done if every one's so-called rights were carefully weighed. Along comes some ruthless man with his work in the world to do, and a lot of little fellows get smashed while he's at it. He has to step on them right and left; but when it's all over cities spring into existence, the wilderness blossoms like a rose, and the whole country is benefited."

She looked at him with undisguised admiration.

"You ought to have been a lawyer," she said, "or a preacher. There's nothing you can't make sound all right. That's how you buncoed me out of all that money last spring. Why don't you get married?"

The question was launched at him so suddenly that he was taken by surprise. He thought of the soft, imaginative, religious girl to whom he had once been engaged and from whom he had fled away in a mood of worldly cowardice. Afterward she became the wife of a floor-walker in a dry-goods store. Where would he have been now, if he had tied that

millstone about his neck? At the very bottom of the social sea, instead of on the top. How hopelessly he would have looked at women like Mrs. Van Sant after making such a marriage! But now everything was possible.

"Well, why don't you?" she insisted, leaning forward eagerly.

"I can't afford it," he said, with that flattered self-importance which such a question usually arouses in the breast of a bachelor. She laughed unmelodiously.

"Then you'd better marry some one who can," she suggested.

"That's a very good idea," he returned. "I'll think it over. You've certainly redeemed your promise to-day in the matter of good advice. But it's getting late. I must really be going."

As she rose in the dusk to bid him good by she seemed to stumble against him. He put out his hand to support her and was met by an answering clutch. He still heard her curious little hysterical laugh in his ears as he galloped rapidly along the darkened road toward Argos.

CHAPTER XV

THE CHARM THAT FAILED

It was the night of the president's housewarming, and his mansion on the hill was all alight. The lamps of carriages and automobiles shone along the curb for a block down the street. The house was on a level with the clock of the library tower, which glowed in the distance like a full and milk-white moon. The other university buildings were merged in the blackness of the earth. The streets of Argos seemed a luminous spider's web, its ends pegged out in the prairies. Beyond a broad belt of darkness the capital glimmered against the horizon, and in that dim glow the dome of the state house, ribbed with electric lights, hovered like a cone of fire.

A strangely heterogeneous crowd streamed up the stone steps, passed between the imposing pillars, through the great door, billowed about the tall form of the host, then eddied away through corridors and rooms on tours of inspection. From behind a barrier of palms in the hall strains of music floated out, but the loudest crescendo could not entirely drown the continuous hum of voices and the shuffling of many feet.

Mrs. Van Sant had prolonged her summer outing

from sheer coquetry, and now appeared suddenly before the president like that "vision of delight" of which the poet sang. As she saw his start, his look of embarrassed admiration, she was triumphantly conscious of the extent of her power. He seemed reluctant to relinquish the slender fingers that slipped coolly from his own; he could not remove his eyes from her radiant face and the white shoulders that gleamed beneath the network of her black lace gown. He remembered her as she had appeared in the pleasant gloom of her drawing-room, a girlish figure clad in white, with a belt and collar of pink, her lovely arms bare to the elbow, a personification of holiday and mirth.

Now she had become suddenly inaccessible. Her eyes challenged and defied him in the same glance, and he almost stammered his greetings.

"And your relatives on Alcatraz Island," he ventured. "Did you leave them quite well?"

The crowd was close about them and their every word could be heard by others. She shared his enjoyment of the hidden meaning of his inquiry, known to them alone.

"Quite well, thank you," she answered, smiling and arranging with a deft touch the tortoise-shell comb that nestled in her hair.

He loved the coquetry that impelled her to show her little hand and fair arm in that quick and graceful motion, and his manner relaxed.

"You must have found California unusually pleasant," he suggested.

"I never enjoyed myself more," she declared.

"What with cruising about the bay, and a stage drive in the Yosemite, and theater parties in San Francisco, I didn't have time for anything else, even for my correspondence."

"Your friends will forgive you, I'm sure," he said, breaking into a pleased smile at her veiled apology. But the brilliancy of her life filled him with vague discontent, and removed her from him again. A life devoted to pleasure was infinitely alluring to him, and he inhaled the atmosphere she suggested with wistful appreciation. She seemed very much the aristocrat. He thought of Mrs. Tupper. His intimacies with her, his flatteries, his toddies, were so many invisible cords binding him to her vulgar existence and making Mrs. Van Sant a superior being of another world.

"Poor Robert has been quite forlorn," she said, "without any one to keep house for him. I'm going to devote myself to him the rest of the winter to make amends. You must come to see us when you get time." She made way for others, and conversed a few moments with his sister, leaving him to come back to his present duties as best he could.

Professor Lee paused in his aimless wandering as he caught sight of the back of a girlish figure standing alone in a bow window that commanded a view of the capital. Miss Hathaway had elected his course on the Nineteenth Century Poets, but as yet he had scarcely exchanged a word with her, for it was a course in which he did most of the talking. He always listened for her response at roll call,

thinking her voice as sweet and peculiar as her personality, and there was no turn of her head with which he was not already familiar. The same glamour that her near presence had cast on him at the reception of the women students returned whenever he looked upon her. He stepped up to her quietly, adjusting his glasses as he did so, that he might not miss a single curve or a single expression of her face. She possessed for him the elusive fascination of a beautiful picture.

"Miss Hathaway," he said, "you evidently prefer nature to your fellow men, and I can't blame you on a night like this."

As she turned, the brightness of her eyes was like a sudden flash of light into his own. He saw the violet tinge about the vivid brown of the iris, the long sweep of her blue-black lashes, the delicate, clear curve of her brows.

"It's like a poem, isn't it?" she said, with a quick, startled smile. "I had forgotten where I was."

"You must write a poem about it," he suggested. "Don't tell me you never write poetry, for I know you do. Every young person of sensibility writes verses."

He stood regarding her with a quizzical smile, in which admiration of her beauty contended with a subtile scornfulness. He had decided within himself that beauty was all she possessed, and perhaps he resented its power to disturb his peace. She would be just the wife for Trumbull, he reflected, good, stupid, lovely, and not intellectually assertive. If the archæologist did not admire a brilliant

woman like Mrs. Van Sant, this girl must be his ideal.

"Silence gives consent," he continued. "I knew you wrote verses. I used to write poetry myself at your age,—epics, lyrics, sonnets. I was full of suspirations and aspirations. I loved the stars, I loved to be alone, I loved my own divine discontent. Don't tell me you weren't thinking of a simile for that state house dome, for I shall distrust my powers of divination if you do."

She looked at him across the gulf of authority and position. He was her professor, and she did not think of him as a young man. He had discovered her secret and thought her a fool. She stood confused, as one caught in wrong-doing, and did not resent his cruelty.

"All the girls write poetry," she stammered.

"Of course they do," he returned, highly delighted with her naïve defense, "and a very good thing it is for them, too. It teaches them discrimination in the choice of words, and it teaches them to appreciate the works of the masters."

He did not suppose her conversation could be interesting and made no effort to draw her out. He preferred to do the talking himself and to watch the play of color in her face.

"That very dome was the rock on which my own poetical hopes foundered, so I must warn you against it. There isn't a bit of poetry in the subject. It looks exactly like a gold thimble or a diminutive beehive from this distance, and no amount of imagination can make it look otherwise.

Then, too, think of those law-making bees that go buzzing about beneath it and stinging each other with their sharp tongues. There's no poetry in them either. I am giving you the advice of a friend when I urge you to give it up as a bad job."

He suddenly wished he had not carried his banter so far, for she took him too seriously, and he guessed that his words hurt. He saw that she listened to him as to her professor and felt a momentary pang. Did she think him an old pedant? Did his professorship and his thirty-three years remove him from her understanding and liking? He wished she would regard him as a young man and fling him a retort. It was his own fault, he told himself. He had driven the natural girl back into the recesses of her innocent heart by a flippant cynicism that was not sincere.

"Don't let me destroy your illusions," he said kindly, "and please do write a poem on the state house dome."

"How can I get up there to write it?" she asked with a quick smile.

Something in the manner in which she flashed this unexpected question at him opened his eyes to the fact that she was not as much impressed and overpowered as he had thought. So there was a sparkle within that placid pool, after all.

"Fly up on the back of Pegasus," he advised her, laughing. He caught sight of Mrs. Van Sant in the crowd. "Good by," he said, rather abruptly. "Don't forget the poem."

The confusion had now reached its height. People were wedged together in masses, and the buzz of conversation swelled into a strident volume of sound. Familiar faces were seen and lost in a moment. Even as he stepped forward, Mrs. Van Sant's bright head was replaced by Everett's genial countenance, and she was gone. He saw Professor Fyffe straining upward, his face purple, shouting into the ear of a gigantic football player. Professor George Robison Stuart passed by, straight and elegant, proud of his red beard, of his very ugliness, of his general superiority to the rest of mankind. It was all like the changing combinations of a kaleidoscope. A lane suddenly opening in the mass disclosed Mrs. Tupper bearing down on the president.

For one brief moment a comparative hush fell upon the room, pierced only by the voice of Professor Fyffe.

"We'll beat them to a standstill!"

Fyffe turned in confusion at the laughter that greeted his declaration, but in another moment he was once more inconspicuous. The lane was closed, the conversation swelled again into a deafening din, and the tide set slowly toward the president and his latest guest. In his search for Susanne, Lee ran up against Trumbull.

"George," he said, "I've found just the girl you need for a wife. She will never make you doubt your omniscience as Mrs. Van Sant does. There she is, over by the window."

"Oh, I know Miss Hathaway," Trumbull replied. "She is one of my star students in Greek archæology."

Lee watched him saunter over to the window and talk to the girl with unusual animation. He was surprised that she took his course, and was somehow not entirely pleased. She seemed very much at ease with him, he thought, and he saw her smile as she took a coin from his hand and held it up to the light. A group of people shut them from his view, and he turned to resume his search.

He was passing through the hall on his way to the dining-room when he found Mrs. Van Sant talking with Mrs. Everett.

"You're not going already?" he asked in surprise.

"Some one must make a beginning," she replied, gathering her wrap more closely about her throat. "It isn't so early, and I'm tired to-night."

"I find myself in the same condition," he said. "Be a good Samaritan and give me a lift."

She smiled her assent, and he went to get his hat and coat. When he returned the two women were still in earnest conversation.

"Horrid old woman," he heard Mrs. Van Sant remark.

"Ridiculous," Mrs. Everett added.

"What horrid and ridiculous woman were you discussing?" he asked Susanne, when they were alone in the carriage.

"You shouldn't have been eavesdropping," she gently reproved.

"That description fits only the fairy godmother of the university," he chuckled, "but I'm sorry to hear you speak evil of dignities. I thought her long feather most becoming. I didn't go up to pay my respects for fear she would call me names."

"You never saw anything like it!" she broke out. "That vulgar old woman actually backed into Mr. Babington's sister and pushed her from his side. You would have thought she owned the house. She stood there receiving his guests and tapping him on the arm with her fan, and telling him he ought to have a wife. I believe she's in love with him."

"One can't blame her for that," he returned. "Fyffe says he's the handsomest man in Argos."

He was not displeased to think that Mrs. Tupper had put the president in an absurd position before Susanne.

"I never knew you to take old Kate quite so seriously before," he added.

"I didn't think people could make such fools of themselves over Lemuel Tupper's housekeeper," she answered. "It makes one wonder whether there are any gentlefolk left in the world."

The remark was not altogether ingenuous. It was not so much the vulgarity of the worshipers at the shrine of Mammon that aroused her scorn as old Kate's evident infatuation with the president. Until this night she had taken a secret satisfaction in Mrs. Tupper's donations. She was not sorry to see the old miser part with some of her money to the advancement of Babington's prestige and power,

but now she resented her impudent airs and the amused gossip of the university.

"Only you and I are left, Susanne," he said, "who have not yet bowed the knee to Baal."

She scarcely noticed that he addressed her by her first name. It was a habit to which they still returned at times when alone. Only when they had entered her drawing-room did her instinct warn her of impending possibilities.

She threw herself into a chair by the fire, while he stood with his elbow on the mantel, looking down on her. His appreciative eyes lingered on each detail,—the silver buckles on her dainty, high-heeled shoes, the glimmer of her arms beneath the network of her black lace sleeves, the circlet of milk-white pearls about her fair throat, and the combs that scarce restrained the exuberant glory of her hair. Above all, the suppressed excitement and brilliancy of her face stirred his pulses with desire.

"I never saw you looking as lovely as you do tonight, Susanne," he declared earnestly. She thought that she had never seen him look more distinguished. He was like a portrait of a young aristocrat of a former generation, graceful in spite of his lank figure, careless and scornful of the opinion of the mob.

"If I were minded to bandy compliments with you, Nicholas," she returned with a smile, "I might say something nice about you, but I think you are spoiled enough as it is. I wish you would play something for me. I was never more in need of music in my life."

He sauntered over to the piano obediently, and began to strike a few rich chords.

"A new idea of my own," he explained over his shoulder, "to express the hours of the day and night. This is five o'clock in the afternoon. Can't you see the shadows falling?"

He went on, weaving his spell about her, the chords deepening into a minor to tell the dead of night, and gradually lightening as the dawn drew near. "This is five o'clock in the morning," he went on. "Do you hear the birds in the trees? And now, at six, you fall asleep again. This is seven, the breakfast bell." He banged out a jocund air and then whirled round upon her, smiling triumphantly. She was standing by his side, softened and charmed, the light of dreams in her eyes.

"You're a wizard, Nicholas!" she exclaimed. "I don't see how you do it. You must write them out for me, you really must. Now, don't forget. You are always so perverse. You don't care anything about your music, and never write it down. To-morrow you'll forget all about it."

"No, I shan't, not this time. But your little hands could never strike those chords. Try it and see."

He gave her his place and she sat down, protesting that he had made them impossible in order to tease her.

"You can't stretch an octave and two," he said, bending over her and placing his right hand upon her own. "There, that's the way. You ought to have my long antennæ."

"You've made that comparison before," she cried with a little shiver, "and it always makes me think of some horrid, crawling thing." She tried to withdraw her hand, but he held it fast.

"Susanne," he said, in a low, tremulous voice, "Susanne."

She felt his kiss on her neck, and rose to her feet. They stood for a few moments facing each other, both her hands in his.

"It was unfair of you," she protested, her face crimson.

"Unfair?" he echoed. He longed to take her in his arms, but she freed her hands with unexpected strength and pushed him slowly backward, laughing up at him with the old mischievous domination in her eyes.

"Now sit down, do," she commanded, "and let us talk."

"But I don't want to talk, Susanne. I want to kiss you. I love you."

"That's just what I want to talk about," she answered. "Please be sensible."

He sank into a chair and she seated herself near him, her fingers crossed lightly over her knee. He looked at her feverishly, at those little hands that always filled him with peculiar tenderness and amusement because she could not play Beethoven with them, at the deep emotion of her lips and eyes.

"Why did you come over to the piano?" he demanded indignantly. "You knew what I would do if you came."

"Yes, I knew," she murmured.

"Then why did you come?" he asked fiercely.

"Because you hypnotized me with those chords, and because I wanted to have it out with you."

"Because you're a coquette," he retorted bitterly.

"I refuse to quarrel with you," she said. She went over to the little tea table and brought back a package of cigarettes. "And I refuse to discuss the question further," she added, "unless you smoke."

He lighted a cigarette ruefully, with a feeling that he had lost.

"I can't be angry with you," he groaned. "Everything you do only makes me worship you more. And you've treated me abominably. You knew all the time I loved you."

"I knew you thought you did," she corrected, "but you were mistaken. I wanted you to find that out."

"I never shall find it out," he declared rebelliously. "I've loved you ever since you used to sit on the fence, a little girl, and eat the cherries I risked my neck to bring you."

"We were such good chums then," she mused, "weren't we? And that's all we are now, or ever ought to be. If we were married we should succeed in making each other very unhappy."

"I don't see it," he persisted. "Isn't it unfair that I should lose you just because I've known you from childhood?"

"Nicholas," she returned, "you always could beat me in a downright argument. Don't you remember the time in the high school that you won a

debate from me before the class? I shall never forget my mortification."

She put her hands over her face and peered out at him deliciously. He smiled wistfully at the remembrance.

"It was a Pyrrhic victory for me. I could have cut my tongue out for it afterward."

"And you tried to make amends by writing a poem to me," she went on. "I was very proud of that poem. I believe I could repeat it now. It was reminiscent of Dobson, and every verse ended with a refrain—*ma belle Susanne.*"

She laughed until she was forced to put her handkerchief to her eyes, and he could not resist her merriment.

"How many times have you made a fool of me?" he asked, crestfallen. She removed her handkerchief and looked at him frankly.

"Often," she admitted, "but I never will again. I've really treated you abominably, as you said, but I never will any more. And you musn't tempt me by being sentimental. Is it a bargain?"

He threw his cigarette into the fire and rose impetuously to his feet.

"No, it isn't a bargain," he declared.

"Your pride won't allow you to admit your mistake," she said, rising in turn, "at least, not yet. You're so spoiled that you can't bear to be disappointed in a single whim. Don't I know you? But you won't be nearly so unhappy to-morrow morning as you think you will."

He shook his head stubbornly.

"It's no use," she said demurely. "You can't get tragic over it." She was struck by something bonny and youthful in his distress, and felt that she had never been more fond of him in her life. "I shall always be just your *belle Susanne,*" she added impulsively, holding out both her hands, "just a fit subject for a verse in lighter vein, and your best friend always."

He pressed her hands to his lips, first one and then the other.

"Dear little witch," he murmured. "I'll never give you up, never."

When he was gone she set herself the task of discovering why she had done as she did, but her mind was too weary for analysis. It was enough for her that she knew that she was right, and she went slowly upstairs, smiling to herself.

Perhaps, after all, it was because he could not dominate her, could not sweep her off her feet. Worldly and vain as she was, she loved the heroic in men. There was no one whom she thought more charming than Nicholas Lee, but as yet she felt in him no wealth of passion and romance and lofty aim.

CHAPTER XVI

AT THE PLAY

"Bobby," said Mrs. Van Sant, "what do you think of Mr. Babington?"

"The president?" It was significant that he used the title, for to him the position was always more than the man. "The students of the university like him first rate."

"But what do you think?" she persisted. "You do use your mind sometimes, don't you?"

Even this thrust could not break down the barrier of his politeness.

"Sometimes," he answered stiffly, "but not in this case."

It was unnecessary for him to tell her that he resented, for the sake of his father's memory, her apparent appreciation of Babington's society. She understood that well enough, but she wished for an expression of opinion about the president personally, not as a possible successor to Colonel Van Sant, but as a man.

"It serves me right," she told herself, after he was gone. "This is the result of proximity. If I lived in the same house with a tabby cat I should get into the way of asking it idiotic questions."

She was not in an amiable frame of mind with Robert, or with any one else, including herself. On the previous Saturday she had attended a meeting in the gymnasium. She had looked down with Mrs. Everett from the gallery and watched the long lines of students filing in, obedient to the president's summons. She had listened to Babington's speech, in which he said that this was to be the first of a series of meetings at which the members of the university were to look into each other's faces and see how many they were, and how in earnest they were. The purpose of the series was to foster *esprit de corps;* these were to be "religious meetings." Mrs. Tupper's name was used once more to conjure forth applause. Finally Professor Everett had made an address, in which he declared in various ways that a big university was one thing and a great university quite another. The whole proceeding had seemed to Mrs. Van Sant wonderfully platitudinous, and she was subtly scornful of everybody concerned in it, even of its originator. He did not appeal to her in the rôle of presiding elder.

It was in regard to the student opinion concerning this and other things that she had intended to sound Robert. Now she relieved her irritation by rolling the chairs hither and thither with a vengeful force. It afforded her satisfaction to seize something and give it a hard push. She would like to serve Robert thus, but she felt that he would fall over stiffly, like a ninepin, and break his neck.

"For I know he's brittle," she remarked, cheered

by the conceit. "They're all a good deal like ninepins, or, rather, like chessmen." "They" were the members of the faculty, for her mind had gone back to university affairs. "Mr. Babington tells Fyffe to make a funny speech and he makes it; he tells good, stupid Mr. Everett to make a moral speech, and he makes it, though, goodness knows, he means every word of it. It's a little tiresome sitting one side and watching the game played by others. It must be fun moving live chessmen. Mr. Everett is like the castle; he must move straight ahead. Fyffe is the knight, zigzagging on the board as suits his own interests. The students are the pawns."

She was rearranging the statuettes on the mantel now, and as she caught a reflection of herself in the mirror she addressed it mockingly:

"And you could be the queen if you wished, and go careering all over the board, backward and forward and sidewise, protecting your liege lord, the king. He isn't very bright and can move only one square at a time. If you married him you would have something more interesting to do than pushing furniture about."

It seemed natural that the maid should bring her a letter at that very moment from the president. "We don't have a chance to see Mansfield out here often," it ran. "I have just telephoned over to the capital and secured a box. May my sister and I have the pleasue of taking you to see *Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* to-night? We would dine at the

Blue Buffalo, in order to be in time. The boy will wait for an answer."

She went to her writing desk and penned an acceptance. It was just the play she wanted to see, and she had already decided that she would almost be willing to pay the price of Robert's company. But this was preferable. She had never been out with the president before. This had the appearance of a little party of which she was only one. Besides, what if people did talk? They were talking already, and if they enjoyed it she had no objection.

Nevertheless, when she sat down at dinner that evening with the president and his sister, wearing the roses he had sent her, she was not altogether at her ease. She was only one of a little party, to be sure, but it was decidedly a family party. The Blue Buffalo was a popular resort for the university people who went to the theater in the capital. There was Mrs. Everett opposite, whispering to the professor across the table. He turned upon her the searchlight of his big spectacles, and she could see his face beam with kindly interest as he bowed. She knew perfectly well what his wife had said, or implied. And there were the Stuarts, whom she did not like. She saw the professor's red beard wagging and was sure that he was sharpening his wit upon her.

Farther down the room she saw Lee and Trumbull laughing over their claret. Trumbull's back was turned, but Lee caught her eye and smiled

blandly. He was not a man to wear his heart on his sleeve, but, even so, she thought he was bearing his disappointment very well.

"Have you read Professor Lee's book?" she asked Miss Babington, more to make conversation than because she supposed the president's sister was interested in literature.

"Dear, no," Miss Babington answered quickly, as if a sin of omission had suddenly come home to roost. "I never read heavy books, though Henry often tells me I ought to."

Mrs. Van Sant smiled at the thought of heaviness in connection with Nicholas Lee.

"It's most interesting, I assure you," she said.

"What is it?" Babington asked. "Something new?"

"Oh, no. It came out about two years ago, and I don't know what made me think of it just now, unless it be that that I saw him sitting over there. It's an indescribable sort of book. It claims to be in the nature of a defense of modern American literature, but in reality it is the most delicious satire. I sometimes think that if Mr. Lee would take himself more seriously he could do something exceptional, but his love of delicate satire is too strong. I'm afraid, after all, his is the critical, rather than the creative, genius."

"Not a bad attitude of mind in a university professor," Babington commented. "There's too much log-rolling, too much indiscriminate praise, in our modern reviews. We owe a debt of gratitude to a fearless critic."

He twisted about in his chair and brought his bulgent eyes to bear upon Lee. He bowed and smiled with deliberate cordiality, and then turned once more to his guest.

"Professor Lee is a rising young man. I saw that last year, and gave him an increase in salary."

The questioning impulse in Mrs. Van Sant was alert that night. The president's comment on Lee was appreciative, but she divined the effort and deliberate intention. She had seen his attitude toward her friend change from indifference to dislike; and now it was one of forced consideration. She was secretly annoyed at his air of patronage, as if the gap between him and his subordinate were great. Moreover, she knew of Judge Gates' connection with that increase in salary, and Babington's words came to her with a shock of disillusion. Her second thought was more charitable. She divined in the president a struggle to do justice toward one whom he had reason to regard as a rival. Perhaps, after all, his ready acquiescence in the judge's demand was due to real magnanimity.

She put away her vague dissatisfaction and rallied with an effort. Babington had not observed her momentary fluctuation of mood. He was in the best of spirits, and grew larger with gratification at the situation in which he found himself. His guest was not unconscious of this air, this suggestion of importance, this realization of the game. It had attracted her attention at their first meeting. It was this that she would have to endure if she married him. She had decided that it was a

trick of heredity, a reminiscence of his father, the evangelical exhorter. After all, she reflected, Professor Plow never posed, whatever else he might do to cause distress.

The stringed instruments behind the palms at the back of the room struck up a popular air, unmoral in its abandon and its suggestion of the twinkling white feet of dancing girls. At once a magic zest seemed to be infused throughout the company. Every table was now full. Waiters hurried to and fro, corks popped gaily, and the conversation rose at intervals into ebullitions of laughter. The music was a relief to Mrs. Van Sant. She ceased to analyze and began to enjoy.

The president's private secretary waited at the door of the theater, and loaded himself with the ladies' wraps. The pit was well filled when the party entered the proscenium box, and no constituent of the university failed to take notice of their arrival. Could Babington have heard the comments that were made behind the protection of the orchestral music, his composure might have been shaken.

"Tom," Mrs. Everett whispered, "do look at that ridiculous little Watkins. Did you ever see anything like it? Just look at him smirking and bowing and placing the chairs. He reminds me of a Pullman porter."

"He's really quite a serious and ambitious young man," the professor replied, distressed. "He's trying to find time to work for his master's degree.

He doesn't want to keep that position forever, poor Watkins."

"It's no satisfaction to gossip with you," she retorted, with the affectionate exasperation he so often aroused in her. "I wish you were more companionable, Tom. Since Sue Van Sant has taken up with the president I have no one to whom I can confide my best discoveries."

Irreverent students looked down from the balcony and nudged each other.

"Gad, see Prexy and his best girl." "I'd like to paint a bleeding heart on that shirt front." "He's a well set up fellow, though, ain't he?" "They say she's got plenty of dough. He's no fool." "Look at Watkins. I'm going to put him in the next *Junior Annual* brushing Prexy's silk hat. That's about his size. I wouldn't take his job for five thousand."

So the merry game went on, while the object of it sat all unconscious of anything save himself and the company of the woman of whom he was proud. Miss Babington and the private secretary had effaced themselves as much as possible and now sat in the background.

Many outsiders in the audience recognized the president and commented upon him respectfully. From time to time he swept the house with a measured gaze, bowed to this one or that whose eye he chanced to meet, and bent slightly over Mrs. Van Sant's white shoulder to whisper something in her ear. She fingered her fan a little nervously, but smiled slightly in reply. Underneath her appar-

ent unconcern lay a regret that she was not sitting with Robert or Lee, inconspicuous in the pit.

Suddenly Babington stiffened, and the chair creaked with the nervous motion. He had met Mrs. Tupper's eyes for one electrical moment, and something in the flash of their green light sent the blood in a tumult to his heart. The moment was past, and neither of them had bowed. Again and again he tried to make amends. He bowed to her profile and to her face turned three-quarters toward him, but in vain. He knew well the fury that was raging in her heart, and his spirits sank.

The curtain went up, and the great actor began to weave his spell upon the house. When the lights were low and the sinister form of Mr. Hyde came crouching and writhing across the stage Mrs. Van Sant suddenly became conscious of the pressure of a hand on her own. She was so deeply absorbed in the play that for a moment she did not realize whose it was, and then a wave of resentment flushed her face. She drew away, and the president did not repeat the experiment. He was quick to see his mistake, and during the remainder of the evening he strove to obliterate the impression he had made by a return to his most charming and impersonal manner. Still, she could not forgive him. Did he suppose she would sit there and allow him to squeeze her hand, like a shop-girl attending the play with her beau?

It was only after she had returned home that she could do him partial justice in her thoughts.

If he really loved her, there was some excuse. Had she loved him, she would not have thought a stolen pressure of the hand a vulgar familiarity.

CHAPTER XVII

THE MAN IN THE ROAD

The next day was the sixth of November, and the voting booth near the university gate was early a scene of activity. As Lee came up with Professor Everett they met Plow at the one-hundred-foot limit. He put a hand on each and pushed them back over the line.

"Hold on," he entreated, excitement glowing in his yellow eyes. "Hold on; I want to talk with you." Lee took out his watch.

"I can't stop now. I must be in the class-room in fifteen minutes, and have just time to cast my ballot. Besides, I'm sure you would waste time talking with me; I'm an incorrigible conservative."

"Class-room!" Plow exclaimed, with a touch of scorn. "You're not going to hold your classes on election day? I posted a cut for all of mine. There are more important things afoot. I tell you, Lee, this is a great national crisis. But whom are you going to vote for?"

"The administration, of course, and so is Mr. Everett, I believe."

"It's a choice of evils, and we've decided to choose the less," Everett explained, smiling genially.

"A choice of evils!" Plow shouted. "To think that right here in a university, where men ought to be the most enlightened, one finds the greatest obstruction to progress! I tell you, your minds are atrophied by the habit of conservatism. You won't even stop to discuss it?" They were already moving on, and he saw that protest was useless. "Well," he called after them, with a sudden gust of good humor, "we'll win without you, and you sha'n't ride in the band wagon with us afterward, either."

As they left the booth they saw the president standing, ballot in hand, looking fixedly at Plow, who was now holding Fyffe by the arm with one hand while he gesticulated with the other. Fyffe, flushed and resentful, was trying to break away. Lee pounded his cane on the flagging in a burst of mirth, but to Babington the picture was far from amusing. He turned squarely about and marched into the booth, a dull glow of anger mounting to his eyes.

"Did you see that?" Lee asked as they hurried on. "Mark my words: if the Democrats are defeated Plow will have to go. I'll bet Babington has been waiting to see which way the wind blows. It was tempting fate for Plow to cut his classes today."

"Nonsense, my dear fellow," said Everett. "I've given my evening class in Cicero a cut so that they can go over to the capital to watch the election returns. I told them they ought not to miss it. If I were twenty years younger I'd go myself."

"It makes a difference who does a thing," Lee answered. "One man can steal a horse with impunity, while another daren't even look over the fence. You're not a socialist, and you're not in love with Mrs. Van Sant."

"I plead guilty to the last failing you mention," Everett returned with quaint gallantry. "I like to be in the fashion." He looked at the younger man with a rare expression of friendly banter.

"Poor Plow," Lee continued, ignoring the innuendo. "He's ripe for the ax, for of course his party will be defeated. But with all his mistaken notions, how much better his influence is than Fyffe's! It's merely another illustration of the fact that the world will always tolerate an orthodox sinner and stone a heterodox saint. In his eccentric fashion, he stands for the best ideals of the university, freedom of thought and speech, the *Lehrfreiheit,* in short. It was that very ideal which enabled the medieval universities to batter down priestcraft and superstition and to bring on the Reformation."

Everett turned upon him a smile that had a touch of weariness in it.

"The question of academic freedom goes back farther than that," he said. "Socrates insisted upon teaching the truth as he saw it. His right to think as he pleased was unquestionable; his right to teach what was then heresy was very doubtful. He undermined belief in the gods, and what was the result? Alcibiades, one of his pupils, learned from him to scorn all authority, even that of the state,

and betrayed his country. The students of Socrates were undoubtedly responsible for the mutilation of the statues of Hermes, and they constituted an element of anarchy in Athens that was her ultimate ruin. Even if we admit that Plow's socialistic ideas are right, we can not be sure of his right to teach them here and now. After all, as a professor in a state university, he is an employé of the state, and the state has perhaps a right to demand that he teach such doctrines as will uphold the existing order of things. His teachings, misunderstood, might conceivably be dangerous."

"Our American youth aren't as impressionable as the ancient Athenians," Lee returned. "The students in Plow's classes don't take his *ipse dixit* as gospel, and he doesn't demand that they shall. Some of the men who pass the highest examinations combat him all the way through the paper. All he demands is that they give a reason for their opinions. I suppose there is more intellectual friction in his courses, more real thinking done, than in any others in the university. And your parallel seems to break down when you consider that he never touches upon religious questions, as Socrates did. I think he is stimulating, rather than dangerous. I am grateful to him for furnishing me material for some of my best jokes."

He uttered the last sentence lightly, with his winning smile, but Professor Everett did not relish his reference to the intellectual friction in Plow's courses, as compared with others. Genial as he was by nature, he was momentarily antagonized by

Lee's half-jesting defense. For once these two friends struck fire from each other, and parted almost coolly. If Lee seemed a little bumptious to Everett, the older man appeared almost timid to the younger. Lee knew well enough that Babington was not greatly concerned for the welfare of the state. He knew that it was snobbishness, money-worship and jealousy that moved him to take the stand that Everett was almost prepared to defend, or, at least, to exculpate.

When Babington entered his office he closed the door carefully behind him.

"Mr. Watkins," he said, "this is an important matter and I want you to manage it with discretion. I want you to go to Professor Plow's lecture-room and get the notice posted on his door, if there is one. If you can do it without being observed, you understand."

"Perfectly, sir," the young man replied, with no shadow of guile in his bright brown eyes. After a short absence he returned and laid a crumpled piece of paper on the desk.

Babington picked it up and read the simple statement that Professor Plow would not hold his classes that day. No reason was assigned, and there was no exhortation to vote for any particular candidate. He put it away thoughtfully in his pocket and then turned his attention to the pile of letters before him: applications for positions on the faculty, for scholarships, for janitorships, advertisements of books, invitations to lecture.

All that day he felt a stirring of the pulse at each fresh realization of the significance to him of that silent battle of white ballots. If the result were what he hoped, he would act. He would strike hard and sure and be done with it. Mrs. Tupper's words came back to him again and again. People did not trouble themselves seriously about another's misfortunes, and a man out of a job was discredited.

He made an estimate of the prejudices of the regents and felt sure that they would not interfere. If Judge Gates were present he might champion Plow from sheer perversity, but his absence left the board exosseous and plastic. Lately the meetings had been held merely for the purpose of ratifying the president's will. Interest had fallen off. His enemies absented themselves and left a bare quorum of his henchmen to do his bidding. He would satisfy Mrs. Tupper at last, and Mrs. Van Sant should see which man was master. At this thought his heart beat high and something of the primitive lust for battle burned in his soul: an impulse of insolent assertion against the man who would take the woman from him.

When he went home he broke his custom and took a drink of whiskey before nightfall. The fierce liquor restored his confidence and he waited with greater composure.

As evening came on Argos emptied itself into the capital, and Babington went with Fyffe to watch the returns. The professor had rented a window in a wholesale house opposite *The Times* building.

There they sat in the dark alone and watched the figures that were flashed on the gigantic spread of canvas across the way. No one in the throng below saw the two faces at the sill, or the glow of their cigars against the dark background.

By eleven o'clock they knew, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that the Democrats were defeated, and that the very state in which Plow had worked so hard for his idol had thrown that idol down. The Republican plurality was small, but four years before the result had been different.

"I think, Doctor," Fyffe remarked jocosely, "that you may safely venture upon the operation. If you remove the cancer now the whole body academic will be the better for it."

The president laughed easily and leaned over the window-sill. Now that the uncertainty was at an end, he felt sure and exultant. The deed was as good as done.

"The instruments are ready," he replied. "Look here; I didn't know there were so many people in the state."

At that moment portraits of the successful candidates were flashed on the canvas, and below them these words: *That's all. Good night. Read to-morrow's Times.* A mighty shout went up from the crowded pavement, and a band of university students began to zigzag down the center of the street, singing and shouting in the enthusiasm and abandon of youth.

"They're fine young fellows," Fyffe remarked.

"You'll find the educated men on the side of law and order every time."

"Even if some of them have been drinking," Babington retorted.

"Oh, well, boys will be boys. They'll outgrow it in time."

The crowd began to dwindle away, pushed right and left by the obstreperous students. Some one lighted a pan of red fire, and the lurid glow brought out more distinctly the long street littered with newspapers, the faces of the people, and the flashing rows of shop windows. The students came to a standstill once more before *The Times* building, breathlessly laughing and shouting.

"Fellows!" cried the leader. "Once more: three times three, and a tiger at the end!"

They gave the university cheer raggedly, followed by the names of the successful candidates, and wound up with a rousing tiger, a wailing scream like the war whoop of a hundred Apaches. Suddenly they caught sight of Professor Plow's huge figure standing on the curb, his head bent forward, his eyes fixed abstractedly on the portraits that still looked down from the white canvas. There was a moment of hesitation, almost of embarrassment; then the leader of the gang turned once more to his followers.

"Now, fellows, what's the matter with Professor Plow? He made a game fight. Now, everybody! What's the matter with Plow?"

"He's all right!" the crowd shouted.

"Even if he has wheels in his head," came a voice. There was a burst of laughter, but the leader continued.

"Who's all right?"

"Plow!"

The professor smiled good-naturedly at the tribute and waved his hand. Then he turned abruptly and walked away.

A trolley car, bound for Argos, came slowly down the street, and the students made a rush. They filled the seats, they climbed upon the roof, and even the fenders were soon packed with men. Some of those that were left started off to continue their celebration with the medical students in the capital, and a few, having dared each other to walk all the way back to Argos, set out after the car with the swinging stride of youth.

"That cheer for Plow was just an expression of good nature," Fyffe remarked, "a sort of farewell. It was more significant that they didn't agree with him. Even the students know that he's a blind leader."

Neither of them stopped to reflect that a few hundred Republicans did not compose the entire undergraduate body, nor remembered the phenomenon that appears on such occasions, the early withdrawal of the defeated. At that moment everything was Republican.

They found a footing in the last car, packed to the very doors with a miscellaneous crowd. The students among them saw the president hanging

to a strap and gave a cheer in his honor. He smiled and bowed in response and his heart glowed with the thought that the university was behind him to a man.

The following afternoon he mounted his horse and went to see Mrs. Tupper. On the road he planned the order of the topics of conversation he meant to introduce. First, he would speak of the election and tell her of his determination in regard to Plow. He hoped her interest in these things would make her forget the theater scene.

When he faced her in the familiar room, however, her coldness chilled his enthusiasm. He found himself launched on a monologue broken by only an occasional perfunctory word of assent. As he floundered on indignation and aversion rose within him. She had never been so unattractive as now, sitting huddled within her camel's-hair shawl. Her thin face seemed more pinched than usual. Her heavy black brows, the mole on her cheek, and the complicated wrinkles about her eyes and mouth stood out distinctly in the light that streamed on her through the window. Those wrinkles told a hateful story of jealousy and distrust. Since Babington's return she had not received him in the sunny sitting-room. It was part of her plan of rehabilitation to see him in the great, bleak parlor. In a spasm of economy she had not yet lighted a fire, and the chill of the room intensified his impression of her attitude toward him.

He exhausted the subject of the election, and

only when he announced his intention to discharge Plow at once did the flash of her pale eyes show her interest.

"Don't go into your reasons, Professor," she interrupted impatiently. "I don't give that for reasons," snapping her fingers with scorn. "You ought to have discharged him long ago, the way I told you." She seemed but little mollified by his late obedience.

"Mrs. Tupper," he answered, with a certain dignity, "there is one thing I don't believe you have taken into consideration. As it is, the state has gone Republican by a bare plurality, almost a matter of a few hundred votes. If I had discharged Plow before the election it would have made him a hero with the Democrats. He would have been a martyr, the rallying center of the masses who clamor against imperialism, and the election in this state would have gone the other way." His look was stern, his tone indignant, and her eyes softened with admiration. It was firmness like this that she desired in him.

"You're right," she admitted, with sudden reasonableness. "You're perfectly right, and I'm a cantankerous old woman." She paused, then caught herself up on the phrase. "I'm not an old woman!" she burst out passionately. "I suppose you think I'm an old woman, compared to that little minx, Susie Van Sant!"

He quailed before the fierce flame of jealousy that made her for the moment diabolical. In the expression of her face and the gleam of her eyes

he saw her soul revealed; helpless rage against her years, hatred of her rival. Then the gulf into which he had gazed was closed. She sank back in her chair, quivering, and her voice grew plaintive.

"I'm going to tell you something, Professor. You think you're in love with Susie Van Sant, and perhaps you think she's in love with you, but she ain't. I know her. I've known her a long time. She was brought up in this town, always hateful and red-headed, only now she's smarter in concealing her meanness than she used to be. Well, she went to Washington and caught that colonel. She married him for his money. Ever since then she's been stuck up and sneered at her old friends. She's always looking out for number one. They say she bedeviled the old colonel out of his life, and I believe it."

Her listener's face was such a study that she broke into a short, harsh laugh.

"You know I'm right," she resumed, guessing shrewdly that her rival had not always been amiable to him. "If you thought I was wrong, if you was really in love with her, you wouldn't sit and listen to me, not if you was a man. But you're not in love with her, no more than she is with you. You two are just kind of measuring and weighing each other. You can do better than that, Professor, if it's money you want. She's not so rich. I don't believe she's got a hundred thousand to her name. It's the boy that has the money. She's thinking of catching you now, as she did the colonel, and if she does it she'll lead you a devil's own life. You won't know no

peace of mind till you lay down in your grave. She just wants to be Mrs. President; I know her."

Babington's smile was enigmatical, but she read its riddle.

"You think I'm jealous, that's what you're thinking, but that's not what makes me talk this way to you. It's because I'm not thinking all the time of myself, like she does. I'm thinking of you."

"You're very considerate," he managed to say.

"You'll find I am, even if I don't put on airs of society and smile on you the way she does. She takes it out on others after you're gone. She can't keep the same servant in her house two weeks running." He remembered that the same maid had admitted him to Mrs. Van Sant's since he first called, but said nothing.

"When I was young I didn't have no advantages like Susie Van Sant had," she went on. "I might have learned some of her tricks. Men like tricks. They'd rather be tricked than loved any day."

She continued to talk, now plaintively of herself, now spitefully of her rival, but he was thinking of her money rather than of what she said. Her sordid autobiography offended him, and her self-pity hardened his heart. He knew that he could have her for the asking; she had all but told him so before, and never so plainly as now. He pictured the figure she would make as his wife, and sickened at the thought. Yet she would not live long. She had failed perceptibly since he first knew her. The excitement of her new mode of life was doing its work, was gradually wearing her out.

He was relieved when she ordered the usual refreshments. She served him with a tremulous desire to please; in her awkward way she almost petted him. As he contrasted Mrs. Van Sant's delicate social art he could scarcely conceal a smile. His present hostess appeared like a solicitous aunt or grandmother fluttering about his chair.

When he was once more in the saddle he gave his horse a sharp cut with the whip, an expression of his irritation. The spirited animal reared on his hind legs, snorted with surprise, and then sped down the road at a furious pace. Something of the master's state of mind was communicated to the beast's sensitive nature.

The president had passed the city limits and was well on the way toward Argos when he caught sight of a familiar figure coming toward him on a bicycle. The autumn afternoon was rapidly deepening into night, but Plow's square shoulders sprang up against the luminous sky-line for a moment at the crest of a hill. The professor never bent over the handle-bars, but sat on his saddle like a tower. His silhouette had not dropped below the ridge before the president's mind was made up, and as the rider sped smoothly past he turned in his saddle with a shout.

The two men circled slowly and approached each other. At last Plow dismounted from his wheel and stood in silence, his hand resting on the bar. The horse danced nervously about the immovable figure, as his master jerked the reins. All the

concentrated emotions of the past year in regard to this man surged in the president's heart and gave a vindictive distinctness to his words.

"Professor Plow, I stopped you merely to inform you of your discharge from the university. I do not think you need to ask the reason, but you're welcome to it for the asking."

There was no response from the man in the road. Suddenly a ray of light from the setting sun flooded all the cloudy sky with ridges of pale splendor, and Babington saw the strange eyes of his enemy uplifted implacably to his own. His impulse of arrogance and hatred was so great that he could almost have ridden him down.

"You understand me?" he said haughtily. "The discharge is to take effect immediately."

For reply Plow leisurely remounted his wheel and rode away. The president laughed insolently after the retreating figure and then resumed his furious pace toward Argos.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE DECIDING VOTE

As soon as the president reached Argos he telegraphed to a young political economist in the east, with whom he had previously corresponded, and asked him to come on at once to take the vacant chair. Then he went home and wrote Professor Plow a diplomatic letter, to make the dismissal formal. In this note he specified the causes of his action: offensive political partizanship in a professor of a state university, and neglect of duty. Not a word was said about Plow's advocacy of the public ownership of public utilities, nor about any of his opinions. From the wording of the letter one could not guess whether the offender were a Republican or a Democrat, nor estimate the extent of his neglect of university duties.

After dinner Babington attended a meeting of the committee on athletics, of which he was chairman, and mailed the letter on the way. The discussion at the meeting was protracted and unsatisfactory. The annual football game with Washington University was to occur on the third day, and charges of professionalism had been made by each side against the other. The best two players

at Argos were under suspicion. They were accused of having played baseball for money during the previous summer, and, in addition, their class standing was below the mark. There was no proof of professionalism, but the low standing of the men was beyond doubt.

At eleven o'clock the meeting adjourned without having reached any more definite decision than to bring the matter before the faculty on the morrow. Three members of the committee prepared a majority report recommending that the men be allowed to play, but Everett and Lee resolved to present a minority report in dissent.

Babington went home in a dissatisfied frame of mind. He did not care to analyze his own motives in advocating leniency toward the suspected players; he was irritated at the stubbornness of Everett and Lee, and physical weariness brought on a vague foreboding in regard to Plow. As he passed the mail-box he almost wished he could recover the letter and then patch up the quarrel by word of mouth; but his telegram was already in the possession of Plow's successor, and the die was cast. He remembered that implacable look in the twilight, that silence more ominous than words, and his heart failed him.

He passed on, marshaling reason and experience to his rescue. After all, he need not fear the attacks of the newspapers. He had endured one fierce assault without tottering, and might well doubt that any biting power lay behind the journalistic bark.

Later, he lay awake, a prey to the warring forces within him. When he heard the clock in the library tower strike one he realized that the time for sleep had passed, that only the dawn would bring oblivion. He thought of getting up to read, to smoke, to take a drink, to write a letter, but the hours went by, leaving him still unable to arise, unable to sleep.

At three o'clock he pictured the huge presses of *The Times* already reeling off the first edition. Somewhere on that white roll of paper, indistinguishable because of the rapid whirl, was a heavy headline, telling of that meeting on the road, that would smite him like a whip. Again and again and again, thousands of times, it told its startling story, soon to be read and discussed all over the state. Of course Plow had ridden into the capital and given the papers his version of the incident. Babington mentally elaborated a denial of rudeness. He would write to *The Times* and say that he had prepared the professor most courteously and considerately for the letter of dismissal which it would be his painful duty to write. There were no witnesses of the scene, he reflected, and one man's word was as good as another's. The self-control and urbanity of his letter would win sympathy and credence. The thought of the whirling presses at length became monotonous and sedative, and he failed to hear the clock strike four.

On Thursday morning he opened the paper with trembling haste, but found nothing more startling than the usual murders and accidents and the later

details of the Republican victory. He went to his office, giddy from lack of sleep, but happy in the hope that Plow would drop quietly out of sight without a struggle. His silence was an admission of guilt, and Babington chid himself for failing to realize the moral strength of his own position. On his desk he found the acceptance of Plow's successor, a young doctor of philosophy, well off in his own right,—a man after the president's own heart.

"By the way, Mr. Watkins," he said, "have you seen Professor Plow this morning?"

"Yes, sir. He came for his mail about eight o'clock, and then went away again."

"How did he seem?" Babington asked, with apparent carelessness; "much as usual?"

"A little more so, sir. He needed a shave and looked as if he had slept all night in his clothes."

The president glanced at his smiling secretary in surprise, not untouched by displeasure. He did not relish that assumption of a mutual understanding, but decided to let it pass. He turned over the pages of the university catalogue, and then continued:

"I see that he has no courses to-day. To-morrow morning I want you to post a notice on his door to the effect that the course in political economy will be discontinued until Doctor Pringle comes to take Professor Plow's place. Until then not a word, if you please, to any one."

That day the president performed more work than usual. His nerves tingled with unnatural energy, and he felt no sense of weariness. His

dismissal of Plow had come to present itself to him as a great victory over treason and lawlessness, and his moral rehabilitation was complete.

At four o'clock the faculty assembled in the Philosophy building to debate concerning the suspected students. The president's false strength had begun to ebb. He removed his glasses and rubbed his aching eyes with a feeling of strain and irritation. He was conscious of the tension and excitement in the men before him, and outside, on the football field, he could hear the students cheering the practice of their favorite athletes. The room was warm, and the steam radiator clicked until he felt that each sound was a rap on his weary brain. He was consumed with a desire to smoke, but smoking had never been allowed at the faculty meetings and he did not venture to introduce the innovation. It was some time before the radiator was silenced and the meeting came to order. Even then the president was annoyed by the whispering of the men who were asking each other the reason of Plow's unaccustomed absence.

As soon as the conflicting reports of the committee were presented the struggle between contending wills and principles began. Sometimes two or three men were on their feet at the same time, clamoring for recognition. There was not a little sophistry, not a little juggling of facts, in the effort to make concession to student opinion appear reasonable and just. One party burned with indignation at the stubbornness of the martinets, the other at the subserviency of the weak-kneed. The

atmosphere of the room became more feverish. Now and again taunts were exchanged and the president rapped the table in vain in his effort to restore order.

Darkness came, and the electric lights were turned on. The hard glare of the fiery wires went through Babington's eyes with a sharp pain. He felt that he had lived a long life of torture in that place, and he hated Lee and Everett for holding the ranks of the opposition firm. Lee's cynical, bantering good humor and Everett's stern, gray face were maddening to him. This fight had brought them together once more. Their momentary disagreement concerning Plow was forgotten in the comradeship of their common cause. Lee knew now that it was not timidity that had caused Everett to hesitate to condemn Babington, but honest doubt of the justice of Plow's cause. The football practice was over, and it seemed that the whole undergraduate body was streaming up from the field to besiege the council.

At last a vote was taken and a deadlock announced. In the confusion that followed Professor Everett advanced to the front of the room and demanded the attention of the chair. There was something in the expression of his face that compelled recognition, though Fyffe and two others were shouting from their seats.

The professor faced his colleagues sternly and waited for silence. No one, seeing him then for the first time, would have ventured to predicate courtesy of him as his distinguishing trait. His ruf-

fled and owl-like appearance was intensified; the slow fires of his being were concentrated into a steady white heat behind his large spectacles.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I rise for the last time to enter my protest against yielding to student opinion in this matter. I know it is a little difficult to think clearly while the mob is howling at the doors. They have sent us a petition that these two suspects be allowed to play. They have signed it one after another, as a lot of sheep follow each other over a fence. In their hearts nine-tenths of them know better. They know that these two men have fallen below the standard we have set and that they have no right to play. I would rather we should be defeated honestly than win a dishonest victory. What our opponents may do does not concern us; it is our business to keep our own skirts clean. We must help the reason of our students against their passion for victory at any price. I am reminded of the English schoolboys who called their master a 'beast,' but always added that he was a 'just beast.' Let us be just beasts in this case. The facts are before us and we can not blink them."

He looked hard at Professor Fyffe, but refrained from personalities. It was a great element of strength in Everett that he fought principles rather than men, and no one could ever say that he wielded the sword of sarcasm.

"We are not here," he continued, "merely to teach learning to young men and women. I take it that this is a miniature republic, and that by inculcating the lessons of justice and courage in this

university we shall best aid the state in the days to come, in the days when these young men will practise on a larger scale the principles they have learned from us."

"Professor Everett," the president interrupted, "and gentlemen, one moment, if you please. I have reserved my ballot on the motion till now, and with your permission I shall vote that the students in question be not allowed to play in the game with Washington University."

Any decision was a relief. A round of applause greeted the announcement, and Everett went back to receive the congratulations of his friends, his face beaming. Babington himself could scarcely analyze his own motives, for he spoke on the impulse of the moment. Maddened by the pain in his eyes, exhausted by the long contention, and confronted by Everett's uncompromising stare, he had cast his vote to end suspense and indecision. Had the last speaker been on the other side he might have voted otherwise.

It was after six o'clock when the men crowded out into the fresh air and hurried to their homes. The secretary of the faculty pushed his way through the throng of waiting students to post the decision on the bulletin board. More than one of them made a furtive grab at the paper in his hand, and his pace quickened to a run. They streamed after him down the hill toward College Hall. It was now fairly dark and the scattered electric lights intensified the impression of confusion and violence by a half disclosure.

Babington disappeared in the shadows. He was glad to get away. By the time the secretary had reached the bulletin board not a member of the faculty was in sight. Looking back from a distance they saw the flare of matches held up to illuminate the report. Then they heard a hoarse roar of angry protest, the unthinking menace of the mob.

That night the students were abroad. They felt that the game with Washington was as good as lost by the disqualification of their best players. They argued that their rivals intended to play with men whose standing was equally suspicious, and resented the decision of the faculty as quixotic and unreasonable.

Not long after dinner Babington heard them jeering and groaning at his door. It needed but this ruling to overthrow his popularity like a house of cards. His first impulse was to go out and make them a speech, but he realized that he was too much shaken by the events of the last two days to be able to stand the strain. Leaving his sister trembling in the dining-room, he went up to his study alone. The room was at the back of the house, and he could have shut out the cries in front by closing the door, but instead he sat in the dark and listened.

A window in the front of the house was open, and down the intervening hall the words of the crowd came distinctly to his ears. For the first time the president realized the disadvantage of his policy of imperialism, for he saw that they held

him responsible. Some of the professors were hooted, but he fared even worse than they. He heard one of his pet phrases repeated and greeted with a burst of derisive laughter.

"Fellows, this is a 'religious meeting'! You're making too much noise." Nothing in his life had ever given him a greater shock than this ridicule from the mouths of those whom he had thought to instruct. He hated and feared their unnatural sense of humor, and he took a hint for the future. At length the students marched away to vent their wrath at other doors, and, in spite of his anxieties, his weariness enabled him to sleep when he went to bed shortly after.

There were few professors that night who escaped the tribute of hisses, groans and jeers, but they remained obstinately indoors with curtains drawn. The fiercest demonstration occurred before Professor Stuart's gate. The rioters called him a bloody Britisher, and asked how he could have the nerve to vote in a faculty meeting when he refused to become an American citizen and vote at the polls.

By some means the news of the disturbance reached the capital, and the reporters came over to Argos as fast as the trolley cars could carry them. They tried to gain an entrance to the president, but Miss Babington denied them on the ground that her brother was very tired and had gone to bed, leaving word that he had nothing to say. Then they hurried to the great bonfire which was blazing furiously in the middle of the campus, fed by broken planks and rails. The demonstration was fast de-

veloping into an orgy of vandalism, and the few policemen of Argos were helpless.

Suddenly a figure emerged from the surrounding darkness and stood forth in the glare of the fire. It was Captain Kip, the military commandant, in full uniform, his sword drawn. There was not a student in the university that did not respect the self-contained little man who had served in Cuba under Shafter, and his apparition gave them pause.

"Men!" he cried sternly, "this is a riot, and every one of you ought to be put in the lockup. I've got enough men behind me here to fix you in about two shakes if you don't disperse. Captain Van Sant, turn on the hose."

They looked back and saw a line of bayonets converging upon them as Robert led his company on. Then a stream of water leaped forth with all the pressure of the lake in the hills behind it. The blazing brands of the fire went spinning into the air, and not a few of the revelers were thrown prostrate. Some fled in panic, others withdrew jeering and laughing; but the coup was successful and the disorder was at an end. In a few minutes nothing but a hissing, steaming spot remained to indicate the scene of the fire, and Argos settled down into quiet.

When Robert took the commandant home with him for refreshments, as Mrs. Van Sant had ordered him to do, she listened to the story with the greatest amusement, and then gave the young man the first hug he had ever received from her. He was embarrassed by the attention, but Captain

Kip stood twirling his mustache and smiling his appreciation of the scene.

"That's hardly fair," he remarked. "I call that downright partiality. There are others who deserve a reward."

"Virtue is its own reward, Captain," she retorted with her most engaging smile, "but you shall have a welsh rabbit and a bottle of beer all to yourself, and perhaps even a cigar."

It was midnight when the commandant stalked through the deserted streets on the way to his room, reflecting on the loneliness of a bachelor's life.

The reporters returned to the capital with what they considered the best university story of the year and were not a little pleased with their expedition. But the wind was taken from their sails when they discovered that a better story had beaten them in.

CHAPTER XIX

THE WRITING ON THE WALL

On Friday morning the president awoke greatly refreshed. He had slept through the disorder on the campus and knew nothing of the fire until he opened *The Times* at the breakfast table. The news that greeted his eyes was all the more startling because so unexpected. It seemed that the whole paper was given up to the scandal. There was a crude representation of the fire, surmounted by the portraits of the two athletes, but these things arrested his attention only a moment. On the right-hand side of the page he saw his own picture and Plow's side by side, inclosed in a fancy scroll and duly labeled: HENRY BABINGTON, PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY, AND DANIEL PLOW, THE DISCHARGED PROFESSOR.

Underneath these inscriptions he read the letter he had written to Plow on Wednesday night, after his return from the meeting on the road, and the report of an interview in which the professor defended his own position. He was surprised and relieved to find that Plow mentioned the meeting only casually as a professional discourtesy, and confined his remarks chiefly to an exposition of his theories

of liberty within the university. The sight of the pictures had led the president to expect something personal and passionate, but Plow's self-control gave the dismissal the aspect of a difference of opinion rather than of a personal quarrel.

The editorial page, however, was much less comforting. In an article of great cleverness the professor's arguments were summarized more effectively than he had given them in his conversation. The neglect of duty which the president alleged consisted in the dismissal of classes for one day; other professors had done so repeatedly with impunity. The professor's offensive political partizanship was offensive only because he was a Democrat. Why was he not discharged before the election instead of afterward? What could President Babington say of the fact that a majority of the faculty of the State University had signed an argument in favor of the Republican currency plank four years ago? Was not that offensive partizanship? Did it not establish a precedent? The real reason of the dismissal, as every one knew, was the socialistic doctrines of the professor, and especially his contention that the people should own and control their public utilities. What was there so revolutionary in that? Did they not own and control the mail system? The editor did not doubt that a certain wealthy and eccentric benefactress of the university was at the president's back to egg him on. More than once she had expressed her hostility to Professor Plow, and in all probability she had brought pressure to bear upon the president, causing him to

be false to his old friend and unjust to one of the ablest and most popular teachers in the university.

Babington went to his office early and chose the time between hours when most of the students would be attending lectures, for the hint in the paper concerning Plow's popularity made him unwilling to encounter them in the mass. Nevertheless, there were many young men lounging and smoking in front of College Hall as he passed, erect and unseeing. It was fortunate for him that the riot had occurred the night before. Fear of punishment hung like a pall over the spirits of the participants. They saw the broken rails in the fence, the gaps in the board walk, the charred remnants of the fire, and imagined a long list of the guilty already in the hands of the faculty. Yet indignation at Plow's treatment ran high among them, and before the president reached his office he heard a distant cheer, coupled with the professor's name.

He hurried into his room as into a sanctuary of refuge, and went to work on the letter he had planned, the reply that was to win sympathy by its moderation and urbanity. Plow's own moderation was a theft of his thunder, but he was able to adopt a strain of chivalrous protection of Mrs. Tupper against the insinuations of the editor. He declared in unequivocal language that she had nothing whatever to do with his action, that the reasons he had assigned in his letter were the real reasons, and implied firmly that the incident was closed, to the great benefit of the university and the people of the state.

It was noon before this letter, often interrupted, was finished. Professors came in and spoke of various things, their darkened faces masking hatred or suspicion or fear, for no such high-handed action had ever before occurred in the history of the university, and no one knew where the next bolt might fall. The undergraduate body was demoralized. Reports of disorder in several classrooms reached the office, for professors suspected of having favored the athletic ruling were bedeviled in a hundred ways. The students that were to have attended Plow's lectures employed their idle time in marching about the campus and cheering their hero.

Others were more interested in the great football game that was to be fought on the morrow with a crippled team. Both groups of malcontents held the president responsible. As the excitement gained headway even the rioters of the night before forgot their jeopardy and joined with the others in venting their displeasure beneath the office windows. The president sent Watkins to post a notice that the college meeting which was to have been held in the gymnasium would be omitted, protecting himself but furnishing the irreverent with a new variation on the old jest. A wag among the students, standing on the steps of the gymnasium, dismissed his fellows with a mock blessing in which some of Babington's choice phrases were cunningly woven.

The president gave his letter to a reporter that had come for an interview, and took advantage of the comparative quiet of the noon hour to return

home. He did not go back to his office that day, but worked with Watkins in his study.

About four o'clock that afternoon Professor Plow called on Mrs. Van Sant. She had not seen him for a month, and however much she might quarrel with him when present, she did not relish his neglect of her in favor of politics. She was still in her breakfast jacket by the fire when he followed his card into the room, and though she knew her apparel made no difference to him it supplied her with a first remark.

"I haven't had time to dress for the afternoon," she said, lowering the curtain with a pretty pretense of concern for her appearance, "but I know you will excuse me. Last night Robert was out late quelling the rioters, and he invited Captain Kip here for refreshments, so it was midnight before I thought of going to bed. I had expected to see you as thin as a rail after the campaign, but you never looked better." Her comment was justified, for he was clean shaven and dressed with unaccustomed neatness.

"I've talked away twenty pounds in weight," he replied, "and yet I never felt more fit, as they say. That's because I've had something to do that is worth while. They beat us this time, but we'll come up again. It's a long lane that has no turning."

She had expected to see him broken by defeat and humiliated by his dismissal, but there was an indomitable determination and cheerfulness in his words and manner that gave her a new conception

of his quality. She could only guess what struggles he had endured in the last few days, but she could not mistake the result. He seemed subtly changed, less ponderous and prosy, a man whose every faculty was in harmonious action. He was powerful, effective, undismayed, and his next words showed her that he had no intention of discussing his dismissal from the university.

"Did you get the speeches I sent you?" he demanded.

"I did, and I may as well confess that, partly from stupidity, partly perhaps from feminine perversity, I remain still unconverted."

He threw back his head and laughed.

"Madam, I'll not argue the question longer." There was a touch of quaintness and gallantry in the "madam" that pleased her. His mode of address seemed, moreover, an ebullition of good spirits, the exhilaration of a man that knows the worst at last and feels that the next turn of Fortune's wheel must carry him up rather than down. "I've said all I have to say on that subject. I didn't call to make another convert, but to see you."

There was an unmistakable accent on the last word that warned her to change the subject.

"What excitement we're having about that football game," she remarked, not unconscious of her irrelevancy. "They say there's the greatest time over there you ever heard of. Some of the men had to dismiss their classes, and the college meeting in the gymnasium was omitted."

He brushed aside the subject with a wave of his

hand and held her with an intense, almost mystic, gaze. She waited in a strange curiosity and excitement.

"Last night," he said, "I rode over from the capital on my wheel after midnight, and spent the time till nearly dawn packing up my furniture. I'm going to make a new start. I was thinking about it all the time. It seemed strange to know that I should never look out of my window again and see the university where I have worked so long and had such dreams of an ideal republic. At first it nearly broke my heart, but gradually I came to see that it was all for the best. The place is too narrow. I must begin at the other end and work among men who have seen more of life, who are more unhampered by tradition—the great mass of toilers. After all, that is the ideal university, and there a man can get a hearing. I see why we lost the election now, but I'll not go into that. It's enough to say that we scattered our fire too much, and confused our followers and ourselves with a multitude of issues. It has been a useful lesson, and, for myself, I feel that I am in a position to begin all over again with a prospect of success. I've learned something about organization, and know how to go about it now. The future is ours, and I never felt more confident."

In spite of his earnestness he stopped to smile at her expression, and startled her by his analysis.

"You don't believe in me," he said. "You're even sorry for me. I'm afraid you think I'm a visionary, but I tell you that the visionary is the only

sane man. He sees the real things more clearly than any one else. Every reformer was regarded as a visionary until his dreams became realities. We must have faith in the tendencies of the times, just as Washington and Lincoln did, and mustn't mind the labels they attach to us. Every fight for liberty looks forlorn at the beginning, but that's where the glory and the exhilaration of it come in. I want you to have faith in me, as I have faith in myself. I came here this afternoon to ask you to share this struggle with me, to be my wife, if you really want to do something in the world that's worth the doing."

"I'm sure you overestimate my ideality," she replied, touched by his strange unworldliness, and by his assumption that his change of fortune could make no difference with her. "There's a skeptical imp way down in my heart that makes me doubt everything, somehow."

"Not my love for you?" he asked, leaning forward intently.

"Perhaps not," she admitted, "but isn't there another side?"

"You've told me so often that you didn't love me," he declared, "that I've come to the conclusion you might."

"It's much more complicated than that," she said, laughing a little at the simple analysis.

Much as she admired his bearing in adversity, she knew that it did make a difference with her. She respected him more than ever, but she was farther than ever before from the possibility of marry-

ing him. His enthusiasm and faith seemed noble, yet simple and pathetic. She admitted to herself that he might organize an army of visionaries and be the leader among them, but she did not think that they would ever be in a majority or that their theories were sound. Somehow, he was marked with failure. Just as Babington could not love a woman that was not rich and elegant and beautiful, so she could not love an unsuccessful man. In her heart pity was not the forerunner of love. She was wondering how she could make him understand once and for all the futility of his hopes when he spoke again.

"Is there some one else?" he asked. "Is it—is it—?" He could not bring himself to pronounce the name, but she made the mistake of understanding him.

"How dare you assume that I want to marry either of you?" she cried, her face flaming with sudden anger.

He rose to his feet and stood before her, his eyes bright with an anger equal to her own.

"That man isn't worthy of you," he said bitterly. "I know it doesn't come with a very good grace from me, considering the circumstances, but I'm not really a dog in the manger. I don't want him to lose you just because I can't have you myself. I want him to lose you because he isn't worthy of you. He isn't worthy of the position he holds at the head of this great university. It may be that there's a personal bitterness between us. I'll not deny it. How could it be otherwise, after he had insulted me

and almost trampled me down under his horse's feet? But it's not that which makes me hate him, so much as his bad influence in the university, his holding up of false gods for the students to worship. They're tricked by him now, but it won't be forever. I'll save them yet. The time will come when I shall dismiss him from the position he disgraces to-day."

As he said these extraordinary words she was stirred by an inward emotion of incredulity and mirth. He was no longer pathetic in her eyes; he was jealous, unrestrained, and boastful. What could he do, defeated in his political hopes, dismissed from the university, a beaten and discredited man? If the president had been rude to him on the road, doubtless he had elicited such treatment by some exhibition of personal animosity. After all, it was the man on horseback, rather than the man on foot, that appealed most to her imagination. It was the president who delivered the blows, the professor who talked wildly of revenge. Her appreciation of the situation enabled her to smile, though the smile was cruel. He made a gesture with his hand and she arose.

"Good by," he said. "It will take some time for you to see that I'm right, but I'll wait."

"Yes," she assented. "You must give me time."

"You don't believe me," he said, suddenly weary. "Good by."

As he left the room she realized that she had done what all his enemies could not do, for he walked like one whose spirit was broken. He had

actually come in the hope that she would marry him. She was sorry that they had parted in anger, but it was just as well that he should understand. The scene left her nervously exhilarated, with no softness in her mood. He had scarcely gone before the president came in. She greeted him, bright with mischief.

"Professor Plow has just made such an interesting call. He disapproves of you very much, I regret to say, and threatens unspeakable things."

"For example?" he queried, apparently much amused.

"That he will discharge you from the presidency. I suppose it's on the principle that 'one good turn deserves another.' "

The president forced a responsive smile, though this announcement, following on the trying day through which he had passed, was strangely disquieting.

"Poor Plow! It's natural enough, but he'll get over it. He has another trade, one that he learned from his father, and I have no doubt that he can hammer out a very respectable living if he only sticks to his anvil."

She gave him a quick look.

"No doubt," she echoed coldly. She was filled with scorn at his malicious reference to his rival's early position in life. His smallness was much more bitter to her than Plow's open jealousy and eccentric boast. She had not believed him capable of such an unmanly fleer at an antagonist who was down, and wished that he would go. She had lost

her temper and quarreled with Plow, but her present resentment was too deep for such an outburst. She could not forgive him for hurting himself thus in her eyes, nor could she forgive herself for caring so much. And as her resentment of his offense was deeper, so her punishment was more relentless. She detained him over a cup of tea, and used familiar hospitality as a means of torture. Try as he might, he could not be unconscious of the scorn that lurked behind her cold and exquisite courtesy. He felt that she treated him like a lackey, but though he raged inwardly he found no chance to protest. No punishment could have been more cruelly effective than her silent condemnation of his breeding, and he went away with a feeling toward her that was akin to hatred.

CHAPTER XX

MORE GAMES THAN ONE

The morning of the football game dawned clear and sparkling, and a holiday feeling pervaded the university. A rumor circulated among the students to the effect that the faculty would take no official action in regard to the riot, and the tension was relieved. The students, grateful for the leniency shown them, began to take a certain pride in the faculty's stand for honest athletics. They declared that they would win, even against the team of professionals their rivals had collected. The rival team's supporters, meanwhile, encamped in the capital, were congratulating themselves on their victory over corruption. Their protest had been heeded, a proof of guilt in their opponents. They declared that the counter-charges were an insult, and that they would not take off a man.

News of the self-righteous obstinacy of the Washingtonians spread over the campus at Argos and stung the undergraduate body to fury. They surrounded the team as it sat in the omnibus, ready to start for the scene of action, and exhorted their representatives to win, or die in the attempt. They pointed out the Punic faith of their opponents; they

reminded the players that this game would break the tie, each university having won five games in the past ten years. Some of the more experienced, who had seen the Washingtonians play, climbed up on the wheels and told each man for the hundredth time who would oppose him in the line-up, and just how he could be overcome. It was commonly said that the enemy would play a "dirty game," and that the only way to win was to lay them out with certain deft blows.

The crowd cheered the players collectively and individually. They asked what was the matter with each one, and replied in fervent chorus that he was all right, and more than right. They sang doggerel verses to popular airs, and the 'bus drew away amid a frenzy of cheering and flag waving, the bull-necked trainer standing on the back steps, a tower of strength and encouragement.

There were very few who thought of Professor Plow that day; the atmosphere of athletic excitement was too pervasive. The fever penetrated even into the studies of staid professors and made their pulses leap with savage emotion. They, too, hated Washington University. They were jealous of its courses, its buildings, its endowments, and they criticized its low standard of scholarship. They said that students dropped from Argos found an easy entrance to Washington, and they wished to see the institution humiliated, rubbed in the dust, downed. Some gentle natures refused to go to the contest and tried to forget all about it, but on the morning of the game they were reminded of the

impending struggle by the empty benches in the classroom and the distant cheering of the truants. A few members of the faculty openly condemned the whole thing, but the majority sided passionately with Argos, believed that the Washington team was composed of professionals, in short, exalted the event into a moral issue, and were as blindly patriotic as the noisiest freshman.

At one o'clock in the afternoon a row of trolley cars left Argos for the battle-field, crowded to the doors. They were decorated with the university colors, green and gold, the green for the leaves of rustling corn, the gold for the ripe ear. The town seemed deserted. In the silence of the long afternoon the few that remained almost imagined that they could hear the shouting ten miles away. They thrilled with hope and fear. They imagined all sorts of casualties; broken bones, benches falling to the ground, encounters between the constituents of the rival institutions. As evening came on, many of them gathered at the telegraph station, or kept the telephone busy with anxious inquiries.

Meanwhile the trolley cars had sped merrily on their way, cheered by the passer-by, and cheering in turn every house that flaunted the university banner. Many tallyhos, driven by rich students, were already rolling through the streets of the capital. People on the sidewalk turned to gaze after the excited young men and women with a smile of sympathy and interest, and often with a wistful memory of past days. They heard the blare of horns and the university cheer. They saw the girls decked

in the favorite colors, even to their hats and belts, enormous chrysanthemums in their hands. There were other spectators, too, laboring men, who looked at the sight with a slow gaze not untouched by dumb resentment. But these were in the minority. The venal shopkeepers adorned their windows with the colors of both universities. The very girls behind the counters wore the ribbon they thought most becoming. The excitement penetrated every avenue and touched dull trade with a magic zest, for even the truck-drivers were betting with each other from their seats.

At the field the excitement was concentrated, and the opposing parties were more evenly divided. Twenty-five thousand people sat on the tiers of benches, expectant, and the smoke of the students' pipes floated over their heads, as from some smoldering fire. Babington passed to his seat, attended by a volley of cheers. His leniency in regard to the rioters made amends for everything. Besides, he was the president, and the students felt in honor bound to cheer their chief in the face of their enemies. The bright, cool sun looked down on bewildering masses of color and hills of white faces. The Washingtonians on one side of the field and the Argives on the other strove to excel their opponents in raucous cheering and loyal hymns. In one spot five hundred little flags waved to and fro, keeping time to the music of the band.

Suddenly a roar of applause burst forth. The whole mass of Argive supporters arose and shouted

as their athletes came streaming through the gate and spread over the field on a run. In a moment the air was dotted with flying footballs. Hoarse screams, throaty with excitement, greeted a successful attempt to kick a goal. Players rolled over each other as they pursued the bounding ovals. Then the whole team lined up and charged the yet imaginary enemy.

"I don't mind confessing to you," said Lee to Trumbull, "that this event gives me the pleasure of an annual emotional debauch. It takes but a slight effort of the imagination to transform this whole multitude into togaed Romans and that group of athletes into gladiators. The psychology of the thing is practically the same. Just see those miles of red brick walls crowding about the inclosure as though they would look in on the game. See those black fringes of penniless humanity on the nearer coping and chimneys."

"I always say I'll never go to another game," his friend remarked, "but when the day draws near I steal off and buy a ticket and postpone my reformation for another year."

"It ought to be enough for one of your antique tastes," said Lee, "that you have classical precedent for this insanity. Do you see that tall, tow-headed young animal down there? That's our half-back, Dick Delaney. It was lucky for him that those two men were disqualified. He was only a substitute, but now he has made the team. I happen to have the honor of knowing him personally. His father is

a butcher, and the boy murders his native tongue in the same nonchalant manner in which the old man cuts you off a chop."

Another roar burst forth, this time from the Washingtonians across the field, and the second group of young giants poured into the arena from the opposite gate. It seemed to the anxious Argives that they were twice as big and twice as numerous as their own men. Though they knew that only eleven men could play on each side at the same time, yet the army of substitutes gave an impression of reënforcement and power. The team from Argos gathered in a bunch for consultation, leaving their opponents to disport themselves as they had done.

At last the practice was at an end. The captains matched for positions. Washington won and chose the kick-off, with a favoring breeze behind them.

The ball rose high in the air, and immediately the whole Washington team raced down the field as in a battle charge. Dick Delaney caught the oval to his breast, the interference formed in a moment, and he went plunging forward, twenty, thirty, forty yards, zigzagging through his frantic and bewildered opponents. He outran his protectors, and even when seized he dragged himself five yards farther toward the coveted goal, until he disappeared under a pile of men. When the mass was untangled, the half-back got up and shook himself like a great dog, apparently none the worse for his rough treatment.

The students from Argos were like wild men in their delight. They embraced each other, they

smashed each other's hats, they danced up and down, they shouted Dick's name in chorus. Yesterday he was an unknown quantity; to-day there was not one of his fellows who did not give him passionate devotion. There was a vicious determination in that dash that set the pace and decided the mental attitude of the teams. The Washingtonians, larger, overconfident, were put on the defensive by the first play.

There were moments in the game that followed that put Lee's whimsical sophistry to a severe test. Men were taken off the field staggering between their helpers, their heads rolling from side to side. Charges of foul play were hurled back and forth, and he never forgot the figure of a girl standing and waving her flag while she screamed "Kill him! Kill him!"

"Hit 'em again, hit 'em again, hit 'em again, harder!" yelled the rooters below them.

"Give 'em the ax, give 'em the ax, give 'em the ax, where?" "Right in the neck, right in the neck, right in the neck, there!" came the fierce response.

When the first half ended neither side had scored. The Washingtonians were stunned. They had expected a walkover, but the sturdy team from Argos had shown more coöperation and a fury that would not be denied. They had carried the ball to within a foot of the enemy's goal, and only the expiration of time saved a touch-down. Yet the disparity in stature between the teams in favor of Washington was marked.

President Babington was vindicated, and during

the rest between halves the students cheered him again and again. Finally he arose in his seat and waved his hat in acknowledgment. But there were many present who thought of Everett and Lee, the real champions of honesty, and smiled bitterly to see the credit given to another and so easily appropriated.

As the second half of the game progressed it became apparent that the Washingtonians were fighting for time and hoping for a tie. Again and again they were forced to kick, and every time the ball was worked back nearer and nearer their goal. Darkness was coming on. That great multitude of people sat silent, their flags drooping, the intensity of their interest too great for expression. Only the organized rooters on each side kept up the volleys of rival cheers, though not a few were voiceless from exhaustion.

Less than two minutes of play remained, and by common consent the multitude arose, straining their eyes in the direction of that begrimed and struggling mass. The Washingtonians were making a last desperate stand before their very goal. It was too dark to risk a drop kick. Again Dick Delaney took the ball and plunged toward the line; but a hand shot up and the ball bounded from his arms into the air. In another moment it had changed sides, and a groan was wrenched from the supporters of the State University when they realized that the fumble had probably cost them the game. All Dick's magnificent daring was forgotten by his

admirers in that moment of bitter disappointment, and they felt that he had no excuse.

Deliberately the full-back of the Washington team took up his position behind the posts and prepared to kick the ball out of danger. Only a miracle could save the game for Argos now. In the semi-darkness the punter failed to locate the cross-bar before him. The ball struck it a glancing blow on the under side and then plumped downward into the arms of Dick Delaney.

Right nobly then did the Argive half-back atone for his fumble. His arms closed about the sphere like a vise. The spectators were electrified to see a shock-headed young giant leap into the air as he stepped on a comrade's bent shoulder and hurdled the line. The other players were after him like a shot, and then he was down in the dirt beyond the goal with ten men on top of him and the ball hugged to his breast. A shrill whistle announced the expiration of time, and the game was won for Argos.

It was never known who struck the first blow above the prostrate player, when the struggling mass was finally untangled. Both sides made charges, and the men of Argos claimed that their plucky half-back was knocked insensible in revenge for his victorious leap. The line of policemen rushed in and separated the combatants, but it was President Babington who strode into the midst of the *mêlée* and helped to carry the limp form of Dick Delaney to the dressing-room.

The rooters on the benches poured down and

formed into a procession. They marched about the inclosure, singing, dancing, shouting and waving their flags to the music of the band in front. The fight had interrupted an attempt to kick a goal from the touch-down, but the Argives were satisfied without the extra point, and the two heroes they cheered most wildly were "Irish Dick" and President Babington.

As Lee and Trumbull made their way toward the dressing-room to inquire after Dick Delaney, they saw President Babington come forth smiling, his hat thrust back on his head, looking happy and debonair. Lee was reminded of the time he had first seen him, when he stepped from the train to greet Plow. There was the same attractive expression of almost boyish good humor and enthusiasm. They saw Mrs. Van Sant, leaning on the arm of Captain Kip, shake hands with him in laughing congratulation, and heard him disclaim either credit or injury.

Lee smiled scornfully at the tableau and dragged his friend into the large room that was now filled with a crowd of frantic men. They caught sight of the object of their quest standing on his feet, weeping weakly for joy, while he received the congratulations of his admirers. Suddenly a young man sprang upon a box, his face blanched with excitement.

"Fellows," he cried, "I think we ought to show our gratitude for this great victory by singing the doxology! Now, everybody!"

All gathered about their leader and sang with a

will, as if God had fought on their side as He fought for Israel at Ajalon.

The two professors exchanged a look of incredulity and wonder, shocked by this strange passion of victory.

"Come on, George," Lee said, taking his friend by the arm. "We're too old for this crowd." They went out into the twilight, pursued by the thunderous volume of song.

"My parallel between this sort of thing and the ancients' contests is even closer than I had supposed," Lee continued, as they took their way across the soggy field, strewn with ruined chrysanthemums, so lately the scene of battle. "Didn't the Greek and Roman athletes pray for success and make vows to their divinities? There's a candidate for the ministry on our team who prays for victory before every game. I heard some of the students boasting of it. And they didn't even know that it was impious to sing the doxology on such an occasion! I'm afraid I'm outgrowing football after all. It would be interesting to know just how far Babington is responsible for that mawkish display. I actually believe he would have joined in the singing."

CHAPTER XXI

THE BATTLE IS JOINED

Within a week after the football game the line of cleavage between the president's foes and friends was drawn with sufficient clearness to enable him to estimate his resources and his peril. His friends were: *in primis,* his standard-bearer, Kate Tupper by name, with a bag of money and a thirst for the fray; his esquire, Professor Fyffe, nimble and resourceful; a majority of the regents; a clear majority of the students.

The result of the game had swung undergraduate opinion in favor of the president. The hero-worship that flourishes eternally in the hearts of the young now found an object of adoration. The president had made a brave stand for clean athletics; he had endured the outbreak of indignation with dignity and forbearance; he had overlooked and forgiven the vandalism of the rioters; and, finally, it was he who rushed into the fray and rescued the athlete who won the great game. The story of the rescue grew in the telling. It was even reported that the president dealt blows right and left with one arm, while he supported Delaney with the other. He was their champion of high principles, their

athlete-orator and scholar, the greatest man in the state.

On the other side stood a motley host, without coöperation and as yet without a leader. First, there was *The Times,* an exponent of yellow journalism, advocating the rights of the common people to the great benefit of its own circulation. Then came the faculty of the university, many of whom, by marrying, had given hostages to Fortune and dared not open their mouths in protest lest they should take the bread from the mouths of their wives and children. On this side also stood most of the students who had taken courses with Professor Plow, but they were as one to five compared with the adherents of the president. In the eastern states the best and most conservative newspapers sided with Plow, not because they approved his political opinions, but because they recognized in him a champion of intellectual freedom in the university. But these attacks from a distance only drew the defenders of the president closer together. They were resented as coming from the effete and degenerate and jealous East.

The shock of the first encounter was over and Babington sat upon his horse, a victor, smiling scornfully at his rival in the dust. Behind him towered his citadel, crowned with the wealth and respectability of the state.

The first college meeting in the gymnasium after the game was an ovation for the president. Professor Fyffe retold the story of the now popular ruling of the faculty. He confessed that he had

been in favor of allowing the two suspected men to play. His enthusiasm and loyalty had blinded his judgment for the time; but the president had dared to prefer the right to the expedient, and had won the day. There was much of jocularity and anecdote in the professor's speech. His confession of weakness only endeared him the more to the majority of the students. They told each other that he was "one of the boys" and "all right." When he mentioned the name of the plucky half-back the crowd called thunderously for "Irish" until Dick arose in his seat, grinning and embarrassed, and awkwardly bowed his acknowledgment.

Babington smiled genially down on the tumult. He was not greatly concerned that the faculty representation on the platform behind him was smaller than usual. He had a majority of the regents and apparently all the students on his side. It had been his policy from the first to win the support of these two elements and to rule the faculty with a rod of iron. Never before had the wisdom of this policy been so impressively vindicated. His attitude toward the teaching force of the university had finally become like that of a hard-fisted boss toward a gang of workmen.

He closed the meeting with one of his happiest efforts. It was like the conclusion of a love feast. He reminded his hearers that athletics had an honorable place in the life of a university, but that the place was subordinate. They must learn a lesson from the Greeks, who tore down a part of the city wall to admit the victorious athlete but built it up

again in greater dignity and beauty than ever; and it was because of their architects, their sculptors, their poets and philosophers, that they were remembered to-day. He exhorted them to put away all feeling of bitterness toward the rival university. Both institutions were doing the same work in the world. The competition must be manly, healthy, and mutually stimulating. A winter of hard work was before them, and they must now concentrate their efforts upon those better things, the things that counted most in the long run, the things for which they had come to the university.

As Lee sat by Professor Everett's fireplace that evening he and Mrs. Everett unburdened their minds to their mutual satisfaction.

"It's a relief to be able to talk freely with some one," he remarked. "I'll tell you the whole story, Mrs. Everett, because I know that you'll never get it from the professor. In the first place, it was Mr. Everett who fought the battle in the faculty and finally compelled the president to reverse the opinion he had expressed in the committee meeting the night before."

"I know it," she replied, with a glance of indignant affection at her embarrassed husband.

"Not at all," Everett protested. "If I led the attack, it is yet true that I could not have won without Lee and Stuart."

"Oh, we just worried the enemy on the flanks with light cavalry dashes," Lee declared. "It was your husband who fired the heavy guns and charged the center. But what does Babington do? He

hides and is afraid to punish the rioters. Our team happens to win, and the president walks in under the protection of a line of policemen and helps to carry Dick Delaney off the field. Then everything comes his way. He is the emperor under whose auspices the battle was fought. He gets all the credit for the ruling in the faculty meeting; his cowardice in regard to the rioters is called leniency; and his action on the field is elevated into a daring rescue. Finally, to-day at the meeting, Fyffe gets up and openly gives the credit of the ruling to the president, without once mentioning Mr. Everett's name."

"He didn't!" she cried. "The nasty little creature! Tom, why didn't you tell me?"

The professor shifted uneasily in his chair and rumpled his hair till it stood up on his head.

"Oh, well, that's just Fyffe, my dear. He's trying to feather his own nest by selling his soul for a mess of red pottage."

Lee looked at the professor with affection.

"That's the only time I ever heard your husband say anything against any one, Mrs. Everett. I'll tell you why he never explained his part in this matter and why he doesn't care if another gets the credit. It's because he's just like Aristides, and a living example of that line in Æschylus: *For he does not wish to seem the best, but to be the best.*"

"Nonsense, my dear fellow," the professor protested, greatly amused. "However, I'm glad you haven't forgotten your classics."

"But it's true," his wife declared. "I don't have

to know Greek to know that. And as for Mr. Babington, you know I despised him from the first. I think this proves I was right."

Mr. Everett regarded the two confederates with a troubled look in which there was an element of sternness.

"I shall have to leave you," he said, "to settle the question for yourselves, if you'll excuse me, Lee. I have a lot of proof waiting for me in my study."

An hour later Lee met Captain Kip on the street and they walked some distance together.

"That was a pretty play of Fyffe's this morning," the professor began.

The little captain twirled his mustache and snorted. "If that man were in the army he wouldn't be spoken to. We don't tolerate liars in the army."

"I can't see that Babington is much better," Lee remarked. "He was willing to take all the credit. The two played into each other's hands."

Kip turned on him fiercely.

"It's not my business to criticize the president. I'm here to obey his orders."

"Oh, come," Lee said, stung to irritation, "you don't mean to say your conception of duty is as strict as all that."

"I can't expect a civilian to understand a soldier's conception of duty," Kip retorted, his figure stiffening.

"No, indeed," Lee returned lightly. "My way lies down this street. Good night."

He felt that it would have taken very little more

to involve him in a senseless quarrel with the captain, and was thankful for the opportune parting of their ways. Up to that time he had rather admired Kip, and he wondered at his sudden burst of scorn. Then he remembered the scene after the game; Kip and Babington, and Susanne between them.

"So he's her latest victim," he mused. "I don't wonder he couldn't trust himself to speak of the president. Perhaps he regards me as a rival, too. I wish I were."

He was surprised to find Trumbull in possession of an arm-chair before his fire, puffing lazily at a pipe.

"You have great confidence in human nature, Nicholas," his friend remarked. "I found the door unlocked and walked right in. I took the liberty of replenishing the fire and making myself comfortable. You don't object to tobacco smoke, do you?"

There was a light in the speaker's eyes that belied his indifferent attitude and attracted Lee's attention. He put on his glasses and regarded his visitor keenly.

"You're all agog with something, George," he declared. "What's up? You're not like yourself."

Trumbull straightened himself suddenly.

"I'm going to resign and get out of here. That's what's up."

"No!" Lee cried aghast. "What for?"

"Because of the shabby way Babington has treated Plow." Trumbull brought his fist down on the arm of the chair and glared at his friend as if he were the offender. Lee reached for his pipe and

filled it slowly, looking at the archæologist the while with a speculative eye. Then he threw himself into a chair and stretched out his long legs to the fire.

"I thought you were an admirer of the president," he said. "This is like a clap of thunder in a clear sky."

"I never admired him," Trumbull declared fiercely. Slow to condemn, he was relentless and immovable when once his mind was made up. "I'm going to tell Babington once for all what I think of him. If his action goes without protest it will establish a precedent that will ruin the tone of the university. It will reduce the whole faculty to a gang of timid servants, afraid of opening their mouths for fear of losing their positions."

"Perhaps you're right," Lee mused, "but the place won't be the same without you. I prefer to stay and see the thing through. I'm not going to resign, and I'm not going to be hypnotized either. There's no reason for biting off your nose to spite your face; but your nose is your own. Mine is too important a part of my anatomy to be lost in that reckless fashion." He leaned forward and fixed his friend with a glance of sudden amusement. "How about those coins you were going to give to the Museum?"

"They're speeding eastward in charge of the Wells-Fargo," Trumbull answered with a grin. "I sha'n't be ready to go myself for a week or so."

Lee saw the uselessness of trying to persuade him to change his purpose, now that the coins were gone.

"This will break Babington's heart," he said, laughing. "He'll never get over it."

"I didn't promise them definitely," Trumbull declared.

"Only provisionally, pending your examination of the president's character? And how about that beautiful Miss Hathaway whom I selected for your wife? You're not going to leave her behind, are you?"

"I'll leave her for you, Nicholas; so set your mind at rest on that subject. You've got a chance now. Of course I could have taken her from you had I chosen to do so, but I shall sacrifice her on the altar of friendship; that is, if you're sure you don't prefer the widow."

"I regret your ingratitude to me," Lee retorted, "and your lack of appreciation of the beautiful. I had expected to congratulate you before this, but now I wash my hands of you entirely. For all I care you can drag out your miserable and lonely existence uncheered by wife and children. But before you go you must let us give you a send-off at the Blue Buffalo."

That evening the president sat long with Mrs. Tupper.

"The seven days' wonder is beginning to lose its interest," he declared. "Within the last two days *The Times* has let up on me for lack of material. Plow has disappeared, though I hear he's living somewhere in the capital. At all events, he doesn't say anything more, and that's all I ask."

"He can't; he don't dare to," she replied triumphantly. "You was right, Professor; you was right all the time. You lopped off his head at the right time." She looked at him proudly, and a fluttering anxiety caused her hands to tremble. "I was afraid you hurt yourself at that wicked football game," she cried. "I call it murder."

He was not displeased at her anxiety, and his chest expanded.

"Oh, nobody was killed, Mrs. Tupper. It was just a little fracas, like many I used to engage in long ago; very much exaggerated, too, I'm bound to say."

Her eyes flashed, and her voice shrilled with excitement.

"I hear you knocked some of 'em down. Good for 'em, the murderers—served 'em right!"

The president laughed, and did not deny the report. When he went home that night he felt that the battle was as good as won. The excitement was dying down, and the whole affair would soon be forgotten. There were only two things that marred his content: Mrs. Tupper would make no definite promise of future donations, and the barrier between Mrs. Van Sant and himself had not been removed by her momentary relenting after the game. He was not jealous of any of her admirers, though he had a vague suspicion that she had congratulated him to distress the captain. In spite of his contempt for Plow, he alone had seemed a possible rival. He believed that she was merely flirting with Kip and Lee. He was startled by a sud-

den wonder at the courage with which he had swept his rival from his path. But what was the meaning of Mrs. Van Sant's continued reserve? Why should she take his remark concerning Plow's trade so seriously? His resentment at her treatment of him that day still continued.

He was more nearly sure that he wanted to be able to marry her than that he wanted to marry her. In his present mood he did not think very much of love. This last ideal began to grow thin and spectral. He looked up at the windows of her house as he passed by, and the old desire to possess her surged up again in his heart. He was never more conscious of her fascination than in that moment of brutal impulse. He had beaten down his rival; he would like to carry her off by force.

His sister was waiting for him when he entered the house.

"I wish you wouldn't sit up for me, Carrie," he said irritably. He felt badgered at times by her loving attentions.

"I wanted to read anyhow," she explained, meekly deceptive. "I suppose you'll be having a wife to sit up for you some day, Henry. Will it be very soon?"

"Don't borrow trouble," he answered, not unkindly. "But I'll tell you one thing; you shall know of any such event before the reporters do. I promise you that scoop."

The evening mail was piled neatly on his desk and he turned it over indifferently, still absorbed in thoughts of Mrs. Van Sant. There were three

letters of no great importance, but the fourth was like a slap in the face and caused him to sit rigid:

"Henry Babington, Ph. D., LL. D., President of the University:

Dear Sir—It is with extreme regret that I find myself forced to tender my resignation from the chair of European history, to take effect at the end of the present academic term. This regret is caused, not so much by the breaking of old ties, painful as that break must be, but by the fact that I have lived to see the day when a professor can not teach the truth as he sees it in this university without risking ignominious dismissal. It is beside the question that I have not been able to see certain things from Professor Plow's point of view. I have read his self-vindication in the papers and your own disingenuous reply. It is impossible for me to remain in the university while the present policy of intimidation prevails, and I feel it my imperative duty to protest by taking the step indicated in this letter. Very sincerely yours,

GEORGE ROBISON STUART.

Sixteenth Nov., 1900."

Fury and not hesitation held the president rigid in his chair while he read this communication a second time. Then he flung it contemptuously aside. His first reply was discarded. It was far too long for the effect he intended, and was blotted by the spluttering of his nervously driven pen. He remembered the chilling effect of a typewritten let-

ter, and, going over to the machine, he pounded out the following retort:

"16th Nov., 1900.

Geo. R. Stuart, Esq.:

Dear Sir—Your communication of this date is at hand and contents noted. Your resignation from the chair of European history is hereby accepted, to take effect immediately. Yours truly,

HENRY BABINGTON, President."

CHAPTER XXII

VOLUNTEERS

When Professor George Robison Stuart went to the stake for his opinions he went in style. He had taken a week to consider the manner in which he should head the procession of martyrs, and truly nothing was lacking of pomp, threnody, eulogium and advertisement.

Up to this time no one had supposed Stuart capable of heroism, and for this very reason the resignation of no other professor would have caused an equal sensation. All his acts hitherto seemed to have been dictated by self-interest. He had married a rich woman, he had forced one of his textbooks of history into every high school of the state, and he managed to be quoted frequently as a critic of contemporaneous European events. His very unpopularity made him a marked man. The community resented his refusal to take out naturalization papers, though he had lived in America since his fifteenth year, had been educated in an American college, had married an American wife, and was now an employé, by virtue of his position in a state university, of the government he despised.

Students who found their way into his house took

umbrage at the pictures of the queen, of the British navy, of Lord Kitchener, of Oxford University, which adorned the walls of his study; and they reported conversations in which the culture of English scholarship and the severity of Scotch training were contrasted with the slipshod crudity of American universities.

President Babington disliked Stuart at first sight, and was disliked in turn. For once, the Scotchman departed from his usual thrifty habit of mind and gave as much, or more, than he received. During the past year the two men had crossed swords several times, and the historian's point inflicted the sharper wound. There was something in his attitude of superiority peculiarly maddening to a man of Babington's temperament. The president's knowledge of Stuart's general unpopularity enabled him to indulge his long grudge and sudden fury without fear of consequences. He even felt that his action would touch the patriotism of the university constituents.

Professor Plow could have thrown a light on the causes of Stuart's resignation had he chosen to make public a letter that he received from his old colleague about this time.

"My dear fellow," it read, "I have given you a good send-off and I write this letter of farewell to bid you Godspeed. Of course, I was glad to give Babington a fall in your behalf, and I hope it will start the ball a-rolling. No one knows better than you that I meant every word I said in my letter of resignation; but, that you may not fear the shot

will prove a boomerang to myself, I wish to tell you that I have been thinking for some years of retiring. I am anxious to go back to the old country and devote the rest of my life to literature and historical research. Here I am, past fifty, with my *magnum opus* yet unwritten, and the work will never see the light unless I shall have constant access to the Bodleian Library and the records of the British Museum. Besides, the gap between the undergraduates and myself is becoming wide. I begin to grow weary of the recurring waves of crude young people and am not sure that I do not hate them. I am glad to make the occasion of my resignation appear the cause, and it is, after all, the immediate cause.

You know that it has not been necessary for me to teach these ten years. In my own country men know when to retire and enjoy the fruits of their labors. I hope that my long residence here has not imbued me with the insatiable American greed for gain, that I have not forgotten the *quod satis est.* I was about to put off the harness anyhow, though no one need know that but you and me. I don't know what you are up to, but feel sure that you are planning a long hunt. That success may crown your efforts, and that you may one day pay the cad back in his own coin, is the hope of

Your sincere friend,

GEORGE ROBISON STUART."

Though the existence of this letter was never known except to the writer and the recipient, yet

the real cause of the resignation was suspected by the few that were best acquainted with Stuart's disposition and circumstances. They knew he had nothing to lose, and yet they did him the justice to believe that his championship of intellectual liberty was sincere. More than once, in the class-room, he had drawn a comparison between the freedom of thought and discussion in the medieval universities and the repression and autocracy of certain American institutions. He had even turned Plow's thoughts in this direction, for the political economist was no great student of the history of education. Babington, too, had heard of these general strictures, and had suspected a personal application.

To the world at large the cause of Stuart's resignation was that stated in his letter, and no other. *The Times* reproduced his portrait, printed his biography, his degrees, and the titles of his books. Miss Wiley could have told that the facts were furnished by the professor himself at his own volition, together with a duplicate of his letter of resignation and Babington's curt reply; but she, too, had her reasons for silence. It suited her purpose to give the man she had hitherto hated a halo of martyrdom. Thus, after a pause to take breath, *The Times* returned to the Babington baiting with renewed vigor. Stuart went away with colors flying, after leaving a year's subscription with *The Times* that he might enjoy reading of the conflict he had precipitated.

Every move of the struggle thus begun was fit news for the Associated Press. Educated men and

teachers all over the country suddenly felt a personal interest; everywhere papers bristled with militant letters and editorials. Plow and Stuart gained national repute. Professors had been similarly discharged before without creating more than a ripple of comment. This was the first time that such a dismissal was followed by an openly sympathetic resignation.

It was felt that there was something indecent in the manner in which these two men of dignity and position had been booted through the door. Irresponsible wits might remark that they now sat on the fence outside and exhibited the mark of the boot to passers-by, but the majority believed that a summons to a battle for liberty had been sounded by two men of heroic fiber. Their eyes were opened for the first time to this new menace of democracy, a menace growing out of the centralization of power since the civil war, and of a piece with industrial and legislative despotism. There was scarcely a teacher who failed to see that a like thing might happen to him. Professors in eastern universities wrote and published letters in which they advised young men not to take the position made vacant at Argos. But young doctors of philosophy were more numerous than three-thousand-dollar salaries, and Babington found no difficulty in filling Stuart's place, as he had filled Plow's, with a specialist who would take a hint from the fate of his predecessor.

Another fortnight went by, and then two more shots were fired simultaneously, this time by Doctor

George Trumbull, assistant professor of Greek, and Maltby Clark, professor of mathematics. In both cases Babington flung back his curt reply, now a fixed formula, but though the wording in each letter was the same, he wrote them with very different emotions.

Trumbull was the last man from whom he had expected such a step. He had always treated the young archæologist with peculiar consideration, and had supposed that this attitude of his would cause Trumbull to give a number of his Greek gravestones and coins to the university museum. Now he wished that he had given him a full professorship the previous June. He even contemplated making overtures at this late date, but the letter of resignation was too defiant and critical to admit of a reconciliation. The archæologist's action was based upon a sympathy with Plow, and the president felt personally affronted and aggrieved. Of all the younger teachers he had liked Trumbull best, largely because of his wealth and beneficent potentialities. This was the kind of man he liked to see in the faculty. He had taken it for granted that Trumbull's attitude toward the vagaries of a plebeian like Plow would be the same as his own.

Maltby Clark was a very different kind of man, and Babington was not sorry to see him go. He was a New Englander, past middle life, conscientious, dry, unimaginative, and old-fashioned. The president could scarcely be said to know him personally, for that New England crust had never thawed in his presence. The professor was not a

man of modern training. He had never taken a Ph. D. in Germany, and had begun his teaching career before that degree was given in the American universities. At the inception of the State University, some thirty years before, Clark was teaching mathematics in the high school in the capital. He was appointed professor of mathematics in the new institution and now he had seven assistants in the work, every one of whom was a product of the new discipline. People who were wont to say that he was less able as a mathematician than several of his subordinates were yet compelled to admit that no one knew this better than Clark himself. The professor's most conspicuous trait was his power of impersonal judgment. He chose the strongest men he could get, and did not fear the comparison. His devotion to the cause of education was too great for personal vanity. Thus, while personally the least able specialist among the full professors, he had built up the strongest department in the university.

On the afternoon of the day when his letter of resignation appeared with Trumbull's in *The Times* Professor Plow came knocking at his door. Clark opened it himself, his sleeves rolled up to his elbows, a hammer in his hand.

"Clark," said the visitor, shaking the flakes of the first snowstorm from his hat, "I wonder you don't hit me with that hammer instead of shaking hands with me. I wonder you can look so calmly at the cause of your misfortune."

"Not misfortune," said the other, leading the

way into the parlor. "Sit down, if you can find a place. You see we're moving. I'm just packing my books."

Plow seated himself on a dry-goods box and surveyed the disordered room with a melancholy face. A fire was burning brightly in the grate and a shaded lamp stood on the mantel, but, despite the light and warmth, the vision of falling snow in the twilight outside combined with the confusion within to produce an impression of desolation.

Mrs. Clark, attracted by the sound of Plow's hearty voice, came into the room and greeted him quietly. She seemed more like her husband's sister than his wife, so akin were they in expression and personality. The lines of her thin lips were both sweet and severe, and her eyes, like his, had the clarity of innocence and intellect. In spite of her family of five children, there was something virginal in her appearance.

"Mrs. Clark," said Plow ruefully, "I can't help thinking of the many times I have sat with you and your good husband in this room, and now this break-up goes to my heart. I was just saying that I feel responsible."

She winced slightly at his reference to the past, but smiled reassuringly.

"We couldn't do otherwise," she replied, sitting on the edge of a box and smoothing her apron with her thin, white hand. "You're not responsible, Mr. Plow. If you hadn't brought this question to a head some one else would have done so in time. The logic of events has compelled us to take sides."

Clark continued to remove the books from the shelves, wrapping them in old copies of *The Springfield Republican* and *The New York Evening Post,* the exponents of his political creed.

"The war has begun," he remarked quietly. "You didn't think we wouldn't enlist, did you, Plow?"

"That's just what I didn't expect. The married men don't come out at the first call for volunteers. It's for young bachelors like myself to bear the brunt of the battle. Stuart and Trumbull didn't make any sacrifice, but you—if I'd known what you were up to I'd have come around here before this and put a veto on it."

"It would have done no good to protest," the professor replied, with his literal precision of manner. "These other circumstances you mention are mere accidents, and do not affect the main question. It makes no difference that Stuart and Trumbull are well off, and that Stuart may have had other plans. They, too, have struck a blow for principle, I do not doubt. We have counted the cost and decided that it must be paid."

"There's the Puritan speaking," said Plow. "Didn't you have an ancestor who fought at Bunker Hill, or some such place, at the very time my forefathers were hoeing potatoes in Ireland?"

"Stonington," the professor corrected. "And that's where we're going, back to the old farm. It's not very productive, but we can manage to make a living until something turns up. I may

open a school. Things aren't so bad. Two of my sons are self-supporting, as you know."

"You'll come back here some day," Plow promised, fixing his friend with his bright, peculiar eyes, "or get a better place."

Even as he spoke his heart misgave him, for he knew that Clark's chance of a call to another university was slim indeed. He belonged to the older school of college professors, unworldly, unpretentious, somewhat careless of his appearance; a quiet, steady influence for sound learning in the ancient, established disciplines. He and his wife had never been factors in the ambitious social life that had developed in Argos within the last few years. Their unobtrusive pride was more intense than pride of money. They ignored people like Mrs. Tupper and were ignored in turn. They had despised Babington as a snob from the very first, and he had regarded them with irritation. Plow had learned in the last year from bitter experience that the old order was giving place to the new, and that the college professor of the future must make friends of the Mammon of wealth and fashion. Clark's reply showed that he understood the situation also.

"It isn't likely that I'll get another call. I'm afraid I've had my day." He stated the fact as simply and dispassionately as if it were a mathematical formula. His expression was calm, though his words were hopeless.

"No, you haven't!" Plow cried, springing to his

feet. "You'll come back here with colors flying, if I have anything to say about it."

He saw the incredulity and concern in their eyes, and forgave them for their lack of faith in his future. Of course they would think his dreams only dreams, no matter how eloquently he might defend them. It was a natural defect of their clear mental vision that they often saw the difficulties rather than the possibilities of life. Plow realized now the full value of their stand for principle, deprived as they were of the sweet blandishments of hope.

"It's too early to tell yet," he continued, sinking back on his seat and speaking more quietly. "Politics is a doubtful game. But the university can't stand Babington forever. I'm as sure of that as that I'm sitting here. And when the time comes I'll have something to say about it."

"I'm sure you have our best wishes, and, I might add, our prayers for your success," Mrs. Clark said, incapable of holding out an encouragement that she felt unjustified. Plow's eyes gleamed with sudden humor.

"You don't do that Irish streak in me full justice," he declared. "We're born politicians, though some of us mistake our calling for a time and get into the game rather late. But how is it with you, Clark? How are you off for money? Sinews of war, you know. This is a common cause, and if you'll accept a loan from the treasury any time will do to pay it back. I haven't had a family to support all these years."

"No, no," the professor protested, deeply touched. "We've got enough money to get east on, and something over. We can worry through the winter all right in the old place."

"You'll need it for your campaign," Mrs. Clark put in, very near to tears. Their visitor looked at them speculatively, and knew that persuasion was useless.

"Well, I must be off. I have an engagement in the capital, but I'll see you again, at the train, anyhow."

He grasped a hand of each warmly, and then hurried from the room, his heart aching for them as their hearts ached for him.

"Poor Mr. Plow," Mrs. Clark said, wiping her eyes. "I'm afraid he'll never be elected to anything. To think that he's lost Mrs. Van Sant, too, though I'm bound to say I think that was less of a misfortune than he imagines. And he wanted to lend us money!" She could get no further.

"My dear," replied her husband, "he doesn't think he's lost her. He'll not think so until he sees her marriage to Babington announced in the papers."

She laughed at the truth of the analysis, and then wept again at its pathos until, ashamed of such weakness, she dried her eyes permanently and returned to her work. That night, at the table, they talked with the children of the Christmas they would spend by the big fireplace in the old house on the little farm near Stonington.

At the same time Trumbull's friends were giving

him a farewell *Kneipe* in one of the large private rooms of the Blue Buffalo. More beer was drunk from the stone mugs than was necessary to quench thirst. Trumbull, as president of the revels, wielded a rod of iron. He sent Lee to the piano to play for the singing; he declared another man a *Fuchs* and ordered him to stand behind an improvised cage of chairs while he made a speech on the flavor of sour grapes. He was a sight worth seeing, as he stood with his little German cap on his head and rapped the beer-soaked table till he splintered the stick in his hand. He seemed a direct importation from Leipzig, and his polyglot tendency increased with every mug he drained. When any one of his subjects wished to leave his seat he demanded from him a *Tempus peto,* and granted the request with a lordly *Habeas.* Finally he exacted a song from each one, and sang three himself in three different languages. About ten o'clock the party formed in a procession and marched about the room, singing "For he's a jolly good fellow."

While the uproar was at its height President Babington entered the restaurant, shook the snow from his hat and called for ale and oysters. He had just come from a long visit with Mrs. Tupper and was white with weariness and anxiety. The number of resignations was beginning to shake his nerves. That very day Doctor Brown had joined the rebels and sent him a letter as a flail of his bitter indignation. The blow failed to produce the effect intended. Babington was relieved to know that Brown's strange personality would no longer

be thrust within his vision to challenge his conscience, but the resignation meant more trouble, more correspondence. He heard the sounds of jollification in the back room and called the waiter.

"What's going on to-night?" he asked casually.

"Some young men from the university are giving Professor Trumbull a send-off, sir," the man replied.

Babington could hear nothing distinctly, but he imagined that if any references were being made to him they were probably not complimentary. There was something in that revel more defiant than many resignations, and he was stirred to deep resentment. Presently, as the ale warmed him, a mood of self-pity succeeded. He wished he could change places with them, could be as free and untrammeled as they. By comparison, he ceased to think of himself as young. The difference between him and them in position was more significant than the few years. He reflected bitterly that they were his natural enemies, made so by their official relationship to himself, and could have no sympathy with his ideals and with the difficulties of his office. He hurried away before they should come out, and boarded a car for Argos, almost happy in the consciousness of his struggle for the right.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY

Late one afternoon in January the quiet streets of Argos were startled by the wailing cry of newsboys. Only an event of unusual importance could send the extra editions to the suburbs of the capital. As the ominous cries came echoing down the street doors were swung wide; students and professors ran out into the snowy twilight and bought a paper, their hearts stirred by vague foreboding.

Since the resignation of Stuart and Trumbull, Argos had become a theater of feverish excitement. Ten other members of the faculty had resigned, and their places were already filled by substitutes from the east. Resignations had followed each other with such rapidity that the count of heroes was lost. Their letters were published in the papers with laudatory comments, the president's curt replies were condemned, and then they went their way. A hundred of Plow's students had migrated to Washington University, but the great majority stood steadily by the president and attended the lectures of the new professors.

Almost every day brought its shock of news, and no one could tell who would be the next man

to throw in his lot with the strikers. The president walked in and out, suspected and suspicious. The tension between the faculty and himself had grown so great that they faced him as seldom as possible, spoke their business briefly and left. The irritation of his manner, which had formerly alternated with geniality, was now a permanent characteristic. He looked at his teachers, any one of whom might become the next rebel, with an insolent stare and a jaw firmly set.

The old republic of learning was destroyed, and whatever charm of relationship had existed between the faculty and students was gone. The despot was in league with the plebs, as Stuart had predicted, and the senate was being crushed between the upper and nether millstones. The world-old hostility of the taught toward their teachers had always existed to a certain extent at Argos, but now the attitude was more pronounced. The students consciously or unconsciously despised the men who had often held them down and yet were powerless in the hands of a master.

When Mrs. Van Sant heard the shout of "Extra!" she opened her door and went down the walk to get the news. The carriers had passed on, but she saw Lee standing under the electric light with a paper in his hands and called him.

"It's Brown," he said, coming up. His face was as white as the paper he held in his hand.

"What about him?" she cried. Her nerves had been somewhat shaken by the events of the last two months, and Lee's manner caused the blood to rush

to her heart in a tumult of strange fear. She had scarcely known the instructor in Latin, but a remembrance of his uncanny personality prepared her for something of peculiar horror.

"He's dead. It is thought he committed suicide."

They went into the house, and he stood beneath the chandelier, adjusting his glasses with a trembling hand.

"Read it," she urged breathlessly. "Read it."

"My glasses are covered with mist," he said. "I can't see."

She took the paper from his hand and sat down, spreading it open on her knees. For a few moments there was absolute silence between them; then she looked up, her face as pale as his own.

"How dreadful!" she whispered. "How ghastly and mysterious! Did you read it all?"

"Every bit of it, and I shouldn't be surprised if it were true," he answered.

"If what were true?"

"That he committed suicide. Of course, his death may have been accidental, a result of his own carelessness, and it seems that nothing has been found among his papers to show that he planned to take his life. I knew he signed the death-warrant to his professional career when he resigned. He probably thought he could get another place, and I suspect that when he learned the truth it was too much for him."

Again silence fell between them. She was wishing that she had shown the instructor some atten-

tion, that she had tried to mediate between him and Babington, that she had not indulged her instinctive dislike of his unattractive personality.

"I know what you're thinking of, Susanne," he said. "I was thinking the same thing. We might have done something to prevent this. But you mustn't reproach yourself. He wouldn't give us a chance. I have seen him rude to you, and you remember last spring how he resented my sympathy. It was natural enough, too. I resolved then to speak to Judge Gates about him this year, but now it's too late. You know how Brown behaved toward the last. I didn't dare speak to him."

"You're right, Nicholas, of course," she answered, trying to rally. "It would be weak to torture ourselves with useless regrets. Only, I've learned a lesson."

"And I, too," he said simply.

"What was the poor creature doing in that little town?" she asked. "I never knew what became of him after he resigned."

"He was teaching school. You can imagine the contrast between that position and an instructorship in the university. He ran away from tyranny only to find it in a worse form, for there's nothing to compare with the ignorance and prejudice of a rural school board. He found out that politics ruled there even more than here. The discovery must have been maddening to him, and he was not a man to conciliate people and win support."

She picked up the paper again and then put it

down on her knees, striking it nervously with her clenched fist.

"*The Times* insinuates that Mr. Babington is indirectly responsible!" she cried. "It says his neglect to promote Doctor Brown may have been the cause of his resignation and death. Did you ever hear of anything more malicious?"

"Malicious?" he echoed.

"You don't mean to say you think he really is responsible?" she demanded, the color suddenly rushing to her face.

"Not directly, no; but I can't say that I think his treatment of Brown was eminently fair and just. In a way, I suppose he is responsible, but, of course, if he could have foreseen this result he would have tried to do something to prevent it."

"You're always criticizing him behind his back," she said stormily. "If you don't approve of him, why don't you tell him so and resign, instead of coming to me with your complaints?"

"That's a new tack for you to take," he retorted, deeply hurt. "I didn't know you had become his champion. I never concealed my opinion of him from the first, and you knew what I thought before to-day. I'm not aware that it is customary to tell people what you think of them, and as for resigning, I refuse to play into his hands by doing so."

She rose to her feet and flung him a look of scorn.

"That's all very well, but I think any insinuations

against Mr. Babington at this time are cruel and malicious."

"I'm sorry you think so," he answered coldly, taking up his hat. "There seems to be an irreconcilable difference of opinion on the subject between us, and I don't propose to argue the matter." He bowed to her with formal courtesy and left the room.

As soon as he had gone she picked up the newspaper and thrust it into the fire, standing with her foot on the fender and watching the flames until they had whirled the crisp, charred remnants up the chimney. She was angry with Lee almost beyond the power of forgiveness, and yet greater than her anger was her humiliation. Why had she taken it upon herself to defend the president before one who could not, in the nature of things, sympathize with her indignant impulse? Lee was never guilty of the vulgarity of showing personal jealousy, but his attitude toward the president had been critical from the first. She would not admit the justice of his present judgment, and yet the very fierceness of her resentment convicted her of doubt. She was too fair a woman to blink the fact that she had been trying to convince herself. Of course, Lee would draw his own conclusions, and she could never explain an attitude of mind that was an enigma even to herself. Anger, humiliation and doubt racked her cruelly; but above all a consciousness of that grim tragedy struck her with a chill, and she shivered like one in the grip of an ague.

As Lee strode down the street he admitted to

himself for the first time that he was grateful to Susanne for rejecting him. He was even sorry for her, as he divined her mental turmoil. If she loved the president she could not be indifferent to the attacks upon him. Looking back over the last few months, he wondered at his own temerity in discussing him so freely with her. Pride had kept her apparently unconcerned until to-night, and he had not suspected that she really loved him. Now he saw the truth, and with instinctive chivalry he resolved to make amends. He would never discuss Babington with her again, and he knew her generous nature well enough to be sure of her forgiveness.

"But to think that she could love him," he murmured. "Poor Susanne!"

He looked up at the stars, stilled by a sudden realization of the mystery of life and death. There was not time enough on earth for work and love; there ought not to be time enough for hate. How unnecessary the animosity between himself and the man that was gone! He could scarcely grasp the fact that he would never again see that familiar figure in the streets of Argos, that figure associated with all his professional career. A few years more, and what difference would it make that one had succeeded and the other failed? They would both be in that land where all things are forgotten.

It seemed peculiarly sad to him that Brown's death should be attended only by pity and horror, that the man had won so little love on his earthly pilgrimage. He had been mysterious, furtive, and

repellent in his life, and his death was strangely in keeping. And why should one man be the recipient of love unsought, while another bristled with subtile antagonisms? He thought of the man's fierce struggle for righteousness, of his uncharitable charities, of the bitter jealousy that poisoned his life. His Christian training must have made the idea of suicide peculiarly repellent, and for a moment Lee felt that the theory was improbable. The subject possessed an uncanny fascination for him, and he imagined the imperceptible gradations by which that embittered soul had gone down into the valley of despair.

He pictured Brown as he had seen him the afternoon of the reception, almost a year before, and seemed to hear him say once more, "In heaven, perhaps, but not here!" At the time the remark had seemed a sneer at the justice of God, and now it appeared to be the key with which to unlock the mystery of his death. Perhaps self-destruction had been his peculiar temptation, the one unspeakable wickedness that had beckoned him down the dark vista of defeat. If he had only learned the value of those relaxations which he condemned, he might now be alive and happy among men, loving and beloved. But his joy was in scorn, his reward lay in the blandishments of self-righteousness.

There must have been reasons for his deed. There must have been sophistries and arguments that crowded in upon his mind, to be beaten back day by day with the sword of faith. Often, at night, they must have returned like a swarm of evil

spirits, jeering and gibing upon him in the darkness, until the ground of his hope slipped away beneath him and sent him spinning into the void of uncertainty and despair. The thought of that void, that limitless *inane,* recalled his half-forgotten Lucretius to Lee's mind. It was strange he had not thought of it before. Was it possible that Brown had delved below the grammatical constructions which seemed to form his mental food and had read the very heart of the pagan world? Did the Epicurean convince him at last that after death he would cease to exist, or would at least cease to be unhappy? How often, early in his teaching career, he must have sneered at Horace's characterization of Cato's death as "noble." Did he come to think it so? Did the example of Arria and Paetus and Seneca take his imagination captive until he rushed madly from self-torment to embrace oblivion?

He felt that he had entered on a study of growing insanity, and shrank back from the brink appalled. For a moment he felt not entirely guiltless of this man's death. Had he done anything to help him see the sweetness of life? Had he not accentuated their rivalry by his scorn? Everett had done what he could, but his recommendation in Brown's behalf had been mercilessly blue-penciled by the president. It seemed as if Babington had resisted with peculiar animus the importunities of men who might have thought themselves entitled to special consideration. Lee breathed a sigh of thankfulness to reflect that he had not given the poor

wretch the final push into the gulf, and wondered whether the wraith of the dead man would arise in the president's soul like a spiritual miasma, shadowing his days with remorse.

He caught sight of a girl slipping and struggling through the snow before him, and recognized Miss Hathaway. The sudden resilience of his mood amazed him. It was like a temptation to laugh at a funeral. He had been brooding on a ruined career and an enigmatical death; but here was youth and beauty and joy. His heart went out to her as to a flower growing in a field of weeds, unconscious alike of their ugliness and of her own rare quality.

"Let me help you, Miss Hathaway," he said, coming up to her side. "I wish you would take my arm."

He yearned for her sweet, human companionship. As she hesitated, he possessed himself quietly of her books, took her cold little hand firmly in his own and thrust it deep into the pocket of his greatcoat. He was warmed and comforted by her touch; he was not surprised that she made no resistance, that she scarcely seemed conscious of his action.

"I asked you to let me help you," he said, "because I needed your help. I have seen a ghost."

She shivered as with cold.

"I had been studying with a friend," she returned, "and there I heard the dreadful news. Poor Doctor Brown! I took a course with him last year, and I can't seem to forget just how he used to look. I

wish I had been able to like him better then. Did you ever hear of anything more dreadful?"

"Never," he answered. "But we mustn't think of it any more. It isn't sane to torment ourselves with ghastly fancies."

"You don't believe he committed suicide, do you?" she asked, her voice trembling.

"Of course not," he declared stoutly. "He was the last man in the world to do such a thing. You mustn't believe the papers. They always try to make a bad matter worse. It must have been an accident."

"I'm so glad you think so," she sighed, looking up at him. "I begin to feel better about it."

He continued to talk with her and to comfort her almost as if she were a child, yet all the time he was conscious of that little hand growing warmer and warmer within his own; he was thrilled by the momentary pressure of her strong young body against him as she slipped in the snow. The hood of her cape fell back from her head, and she would not replace it.

"It smothers me," she declared. "I like to feel the snow and wind in my face."

His imagination grew warm with remembrances of just such nights in his youth when he used to take Susanne home from some merrymaking, and the intervening years seemed a dream. He was young once more. The tragedy that had filled his thoughts became remote, a mere passing reminder of the common lot of man. It had no part with his present experience, with this sweet girl at

his side whose growing consciousness of their sudden intimacy pervaded him like an unspoken message of love. He noted her dawning embarrassment with a strange exultation. She made a gentle effort to withdraw her hand.

"This is where I live," she said, hesitatingly.

He recognized the house as that of a rich townswoman who had come to Argos to live that she might break into the university society. He had never been in the house, and he knew that Mrs. Van Sant regarded the woman's aspirations with amusement. He suspected that Miss Hathaway was employed there, perhaps as a maid, perhaps as a caretaker of the children.

"Here are your books," he said.

He still kept her other hand in his pocket, and as she took the books he drew her to him with a sudden impulsive yearning. For a moment he saw the flash of her startled eyes, and her warm, sweet breath came quick against his face. The blood rioted in his veins, and he kissed her. She freed herself from him and shrank back with a little cry of protest that went to his heart like an appeal for pity.

"Don't cry," he entreated, standing before her, self-condemned. "Please don't."

If she had only flamed out at him he would have been relieved, but she turned without a word of reproach and went slowly up the path to the house. He stood still until the door closed behind her and then went back to his rooms, on worse terms with himself than he had ever been before.

CHAPTER XXIV

A NEW CHAMPION

When the president heard the news of Brown's death he was shocked and unnerved beyond measure, but he took the first train for the little town and there did what he could. He superintended the packing of Brown's effects; he telegraphed to the instructor's family, and, in accordance with their request, he sent the body home for burial. When he returned to Argos, after an absence of several days, he talked freely with the reporters.

"Doctor Brown was an old student of mine. He was a promising scholar and I expected great things of him. I regretted keenly his unnecessary resignation from the university. Doubtless his absence would have been only temporary but for this sad accident. You may say for me that any talk of suicide is a malicious slander and does his memory great injustice. His influence among the students as a Christian gentleman and a sound scholar was admirable. I was very sorry when he resigned, but, of course, under the circumstances, I was forced to take him at his word. There was no personal quarrel between us; it was merely a difference of opinion. I hoped at the time that he would one

day revise his judgment and pave the way for a return to the university, but now, poor Brown—"

The reporters saw that he was struggling for composure, and forbore to question him further. Only to Fyffe did the president mention the subject again.

"If he did commit suicide, which I don't believe, we have a fine example of Plow's pernicious influence. That man would flout all authority, even the authority of religion. I hope he did not undermine poor Brown's faith at the same time that he destroyed his respect for law and order. If he did, however, 'woe to that man by whom the offense cometh.'"

It was a week before he called upon Mrs. Van Sant, but when he did he found nothing in her manner to justify his vague forebodings. Her generosity had conquered her instinctive judgment, and, now that he was under a cloud, she became to herself his champion. There was something, too, of a natural reaction from the restraint that had existed between them since the afternoon of his unfortunate sneer at Plow. She showed plainly that she did not hold him in any degree accountable, though the subject of the tragedy was not mentioned between them, and he went away refreshed, comforted and profoundly grateful.

The event seemed to quiet men's passions and to bring about a truce, for there were no more resignations. But still, for a time, Argos talked and thought of little else. The president's uncompromising enemies were amazed at his clever-

ness. They saw that he had won sympathy out of the very jaws of reproach by his adherence to principle and by his apparent kindness of heart. Others were convinced that they had done him a wrong, and repented their lack of charity. A third party held a more intricate view. They felt that Babington had realized his danger and had averted it by a deliberate plan and a bold defiance of the theory of suicide; but they imagined also that his emotion was genuine, that he was profoundly moved by the pathos of the instructor's untimely death.

Meanwhile the work of the university went forward smoothly. The thickly crowding events of the great world pushed the subject from men's minds and from the columns of the newspapers. The impending conventions for the nomination of a governor of the state began to furnish political gossip. It was reported that Daniel Plow, by virtue of his boyhood's occupation, had joined the Blacksmiths' Union and would make an effort to capture the nomination of the Labor Union party. This party had never been much more formidable than the Prohibitionists, and even *The Times,* though it catered to the common people, treated the new aspirant with respect rather than with enthusiasm.

At Argos Plow's election was regarded as hopeless, even by his admirers, and Babington viewed his ambition with amusement and contempt.

For almost a month comparative quiet reigned at Argos. The passions that had roiled the Pierian spring seemed to outsiders to be subsiding and leaving the waters clear. But the clearness was

deceptive. Down at the bottom, dead leaves, sticks and stones waited but the prodding of some mischievous hand to rise up and poison the pool anew.

Babington himself had maintained silence since his first letter in answer to Plow's statement. The only expressions of his opinion which found their way into the papers were his curt and formulaic acceptances of resignations. Since Brown's death, and the consequent truce, his first anxiety had disappeared. His was not a brooding nature, and he did not suffer self-reproach. He still felt that he had been justified in refusing Everett's request for Brown's advancement, on the ground that there was no money. He could not admit to himself his stronger motive, a desire to show his power to the man who might have had his office. Even that sad event had redounded to his credit, as if to prove the justice of his course. Much of his nervous irritability disappeared. He was genial once more, as in the early days of his incumbency, but there was a lurking sardonic humor behind his geniality that boded ill for his enemies. He walked with a surer sense of power and security. His smile easily merged into a sneer, and the stare of his bulgent eyes was more suggestive than ever before of thinly veiled contempt. It was generally noticed that he had taken on weight, and his enemies commented on the fullness of his throat as an indication of high living.

The president knew to whom he could confide his opinion of Daniel Plow, the blacksmith and

haranguer of "wage slaves." Fyffe and Watkins and some of the new professors greeted his sallies at Plow's expense with sympathetic grins. Independent instructors, who were too young to serve on committees and had no vote in the faculty, found it easy to show their dislike of the president by avoiding him. His receptions were now attended only by the students and by his small band of henchmen. The heads of the departments were obliged to see him daily on matters of business, and the feud continued. The hatred of many of these men toward Babington became almost a monomania, all the more intense and soul-racking because of the need of concealment. Some of them brooded upon it with such bitterness that all the joy of life and incentive to labor seemed to leave them. Even Professor Everett had changed. He appeared grayer and more stern, as he began to realize the hopelessness of his long fight to keep up the standard of the university.

The president was planning another *coup* with which to finish his second year. Mrs. Tupper had promised him two hundred thousand dollars in cash for a recitation hall in memory of her husband. The architectural plans were now under way, but no one knew the secret except the benefactress, the architect, the president and Mrs. Van Sant.

The struggle for students between Washington University and the institution at Argos had become acute. Each was bidding for patronage by accepting admission certificates more freely from the schools of the state. Up to this time the State

University had required Greek and Latin of candidates for the degree of Bachelor of Arts, but Washington accepted substitutes for the ancient languages, German, French, botany, anything, and its numbers grew apace. Babington felt that he must offer like concessions. Those one hundred students he had lost must be more than offset by the size of the next freshman class. The doors must be thrown open to any one who would come. The way to get students was to make the entrance easy. He must prove his success not only by getting donations, but also by reporting each year "the largest incoming class in the history of the institution."

It was more than four months since Professor Everett had said at the first college meeting in the gymnasium that a big university was one thing and a great university quite another. At the time the utterance had seemed to Babington a mere platitude, but now he began to realize that the professor meant what he said. For several years Everett and Lee had been members of the committee on credentials, and had stood firmly against the tendency of the times to remove the classical requirements from the catalogue. Babington wished to see the classics go, in accordance with his policy of numbers at any cost. At present Latin and Greek were required only for the degree of Bachelor of Arts; other courses were crowned by other degrees, as Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Philosophy, Bachelor of Letters. The president wished to remove the required classics and

to give the first degree for all courses; in a word, to make it a mantle of charity covering a multitude of sins of omission.

Conservatives like Everett and Lee wished to retain the old significance of the degree of Bachelor of Arts; in this last ditch they took their stand. The very sight of Everett's wise, strong, owl-like face began to fill the president with profound irritation. He grew to hate Lee's salient nose, his assured poise, his gently sarcastic smile, the very twirl of his glasses. These were the men that would balk him in his cherished plan and allow Washington University to gain the lead. The question of entrance requirements came up again and again in the faculty meetings, but Babington could not win a majority to his side. He had won the scientific men, for they hated the classics more than they hated him and wished to banish them to increase the prestige and influence of their own departments. On the other side were the professors of Greek, English, Latin and most of the teachers of history, modern languages and kindred subjects, many of them moved by enmity against the president rather than by strong conviction.

Babington's interest in the subject was more personal than educational. He was determined to be president of the biggest university between the Alleghanies and the Rockies, and he knew the way to accomplish his end. He had studied the sudden expansion of eastern universities, and had grasped the secret of success. It was his cleverness in falling in with the tendency of the times that had won him

his reputation as a progressive educator, and his call to Argos. He had borrowed the hammer of the great iconoclasts with such assurance that he made it seem his own peculiar weapon. Had it been feasible he would have discharged all the men that dared to thwart his ambition with their prating of scholarship and culture and high ideals. He was looking a long way into the future. After he succeeded in getting the classics out of the entrance requirements he intended to shorten the college curriculum to three years, that he might draw men to the college who would otherwise go straight from the schools to the study of medicine and law.

The deadlock between the president and Professors Everett and Lee was well known to the managers of *The Times,* and on this situation they based their hope of a new sensation. Both men were giving lectures in the university extension course in the capital, and a reporter was always present, watching for some casual question that might call forth an opinion reflecting on the president. Everett was too wise a man to be caught, but Lee was less anxious to maintain a neutral front.

One Friday evening he was delivering a lecture on Duns Scotus and the medieval universities. It was a natural step to American institutions of learning, and after the lecture he found himself involved in a discussion regarding the educational tendencies of the times. He spoke frankly of the danger of large endowments and magnificent buildings as tending to foster a spirit of materialism.

"Just as men often build great houses to die in

when they have grown rich," he said, "so I sometimes think universities erect academic palaces which become the mausoleums of their earlier and sturdier ideals."

His views in regard to mere numbers, as opposed to a high standard, followed.

"A little learning is sometimes a dangerous thing, as the poet says," he remarked. "We must have our hewers of wood and drawers of water. It is better to train thoroughly a few choice spirits to rule the masses intelligently than to dose the mob with large spoonfuls of peptonized mental pabulum."

Finally the suppression of the free discussion of socialistic problems was mentioned.

"People say that this suppression is due to the influence of money and monopoly," the reporter remarked, "but what do you think?"

"It would be idle to deny it, and personally I think it is much to be regretted. Such problems ought to be referred to the university as to a higher tribunal. It is there that they should be weighed, and approved or found wanting. The university should be a seminary of statesmen; only thus can she repay the state for her support."

"Then you think that Professor Plow was in the right?"

It was a leading question, and the lecturer chose to give it his own interpretation.

"I can't say that Professor Plow succeeded in making me a convert," he replied.

"I didn't mean to ask whether he was right in

his political views, but in demanding the privilege of free speech within the university."

Lee did not know his questioner, but he suspected his purpose. Formality had ended with the lecture, and the few that remained were gathered about him like a band of friends. Only when Plow's name was mentioned did he realize that unwittingly he had been talking for publication. Now he picked up his papers to indicate that the conversation was at an end, and looked at the young man as if he were an impertinent yokel who could not understand the nature of his offense.

"I think I have already answered that question in effect," he said. "Good night."

The next morning when he picked up the paper the first thing that met his eyes was the following announcement:

PROFESSOR LEE JOINS THE ACADEMIC STRIKE. CRITICIZES THE PRESIDENT AT A LECTURE IN THE CAPITAL.

"This is interesting," he murmured. "When a man is looking for trouble he usually manages to find it. That is what I get for boasting that I would stay and see the thing through." He adjusted his glasses and settled himself for a perusal of the article. "There ought to be a commentary," he reflected, turning to the editorial page.

His expectation was justified. With a fanfare of editorial trumpets he heard himself announced

as a new champion of liberty entering the lists. Professor Lee had openly said that the discussion of socialistic problems ought to be allowed in the university. He admitted that the suppression of such discussions was due to the influence of money and monopoly. He had declared, in effect, that Professor Plow was right and that President Babington was wrong in regard to the main point at issue between them; for it was quite unnecessary to remind the readers of *The Times* that the charge of offensive political partizanship against Plow was merely a blind to conceal the real cause of his dismissal, namely, his socialistic views, and especially his advocacy of the public ownership of public utilities. Had Plow upheld Republican doctrines, he would still be at his post in the university. It had been known for some time that the relations between the professor of English and the president were much strained, and this open breach could scarcely come as a surprise to those on the inside. The professor was one of the most promising and brilliant of the younger men in the faculty. He was born and brought up in the capital, he was a graduate of the university at Argos, and a man of influence. The matter could not rest where it was. Either the professor must retract, or the president would be bound by the precedent he had established to demand his resignation. Of one thing the editor was sure: Professor Lee was a man that would stand by his guns.

When Lee went down to breakfast his fellow

boarders, unmarried members of the faculty, greeted him with ironical congratulations as the latest champion of the lost cause.

"Lost?" he echoed, looking at them with a challenging smile, his head thrown back.

"What will you do about it?" they asked.

"Do? Nothing. What should I do?"

They suspected that his plan of action was mapped out and plied him with questions, but he turned their curiosity aside with light jests and sauntered away, leaving them mystified and intent.

About two hours later he entered the president's office with a letter in his hand.

Babington glanced up at his visitor, an ugly light in his eyes, and kept his seat. His habitual lack of courtesy toward his professors deprived his present manner of any unusual significance, but his one word of interrogation was like a snarl.

"Well?"

"The matter is private, Mr. Babington," Lee answered, with a glance at Watkins. The secretary looked at the president for a hint, as a dog might look at his master, but Babington sat still, the tide of anger flooding his face until the very tips of his ears were red. Lee turned sternly to the private secretary.

"Mr. Watkins," he said quietly, "you will oblige me very much by leaving us alone for a few minutes." And Watkins went.

"Really, I'm not accustomed to such high-handed procedures in my office—" Babington began.

The other beat a tattoo on his left hand with the

letter which he held in his right, but did not raise his voice, and his smile was almost sweet.

"Mr. President, may I request an explanation of this letter of dismissal which I have just found on my desk?"

The president's face grew purple with choler, and he rose to his feet.

"I believe the letter explains itself, sir. I have nothing to add."

"Mr. President," Lee resumed, "this is a very serious matter for you as well as for me, and I must insist that you listen to what I have to say. It is unfortunate that an expression of my opinions has found its way into the public press. I regret that I can not retract them, but I merely wish to say that you are mistaken in your impression that I have 'openly criticized the management of the university' and 'undermined its influence.' I supposed myself in the company of friends, but it seems that a reporter was present. My error, or oversight, or what you will, is not sufficient ground for your action."

The president's round eyes burned with baffled hatred. He had hoped to remove this obstacle to his plans from his path. If Lee were gone Everett would lose his strongest ally and he could easily get a majority of the faculty to favor a revision of the entrance requirements; only those two men loomed between him and the success that was almost within his grasp. His eyes shot sudden suspicion, and his smile was a sneer of incredulity.

"These explanations after the event are scarcely convincing, Mr. Lee. But, at all events, such a

lack of loyalty to the president of the university can not be overlooked. This can not be the first time that you have expressed your opinions. I must have loyal men here, not obstructionists and detractors. I must consider the welfare of the institution and of the people of the state."

"Mr. Babington," the professor said quietly, his nostrils quivering, "do I understand that you doubt my word, that you give me the lie?"

The president saw that he had gone too far, and raised his hand as if to ward off a blow or to propitiate his enemy. But even in his momentary fear his fury was augmented. Plow had endured his insults in silence, and the other men had not faced him personally. They had merely written their resignations and disappeared. He had come to think of opposition to himself as treason. Only an unreasonable fear of a violent outbreak caused him to temporize.

"Not at all, not at all, Mr. Lee," he protested quickly. "Listen to me a moment, if you please. I merely meant to say that the public at large would not be inclined to credit your explanation. You took it as an expression of personal opinion, thereby doing me an additional injustice. But I waive that point." He felt sure of his position once more. No one would believe that Lee's explanation was true; they would suppose it the result of an attack of cowardice. Instinctively he took out his watch, a hint of dismissal that had done more than any other one thing to win him the hatred of his faculty.

"You'll have to excuse me now," he continued, with a return to his pompous manner. "I'm very busy."

"Mr. Babington," Lee answered steadily, "I wish to tell you that I will not accept dismissal at your hands. I will continue my work as usual."

The president sat down in his chair and scrutinized his enemy keenly. For the first time he began to get a correct estimate of the man he had to deal with. Anger, intimidation, sneers, were of no avail, and his tone became judicial.

"You can't do that, Mr. Lee. You might as well accept the inevitable."

"It is very far from inevitable," the professor returned, "and for that very reason I said this matter is as serious for you as for me. I have a life appointment and can not be removed unless incompetency or immorality is proved against me. It is so stated of full professors in the statutes of the university. You have no cause for your action which will stand the test of a court of law."

The president started as if he had received a slight electric shock. Behind his insolent stare he was thinking fast. A court of law; why not? Surely, disloyalty could be proved, and disloyalty rendered a man incompetent to do his work effectively. He knew where he could get money to bribe the jury. Mrs. Tupper had become as wax in his hands, and she hated Lee. If he won his case, as he must, the rest of his career would be one broadening path of success. The entrance requirements would be what he desired, and the attendance of the

university would double in a few years. Other malcontents would learn to keep their opinions to themselves and to favor his policies. One more victorious fight and his power would be absolute. He had formed the habit of winning, and he would win again. He had remembered that Lee was a favorite of Judge Gates, but that fact had not deterred him from writing the letter of dismissal. The triumphs of the past year had increased his confidence in himself and in the strength of his position, and tyranny had become a kind of passion in his soul. The old regent had been absent a long time, and his return was doubtful. There was only one other consideration that gave him pause, Mrs. Van Sant's friendship for this man. But she had not championed Plow's cause, and he felt that she would not distress herself greatly about Lee. If this impertinent fellow had ever presumed to love her it would give him an added pleasure to cast him out. As he took a mental survey of his past triumphs and present position he broke into a smile.

"A court of law?" he queried. "You might try it."

Lee stood looking at him a moment in inexpressible scorn.

"I will," he retorted, and left the room.

CHAPTER XXV

BROUGHT TO BAY

By winding paths impossible to trace, the news of Lee's dismissal reached the office of *The Times* before many days had passed. The paper then published the report of an interview in which the professor admitted that he had been asked to resign, and stated that he had not done so. The president declared that, as far as he was concerned, Professor Lee was no longer connected with the university. Yet the professor was giving his courses as usual. Evidently the policy of intimidation had begun to fail, and Dr. Babington had met his match.

The president ignored Lee when they chanced to meet, and the professor was equally blind. Mrs. Van Sant was away on à visit, but even had she been in Argos Lee would not have ventured to call. Possessed as he was of the conviction that she loved the president, the situation was too delicate to admit of such a risk. Of course she kept track of events in Argos, he reflected, and he wondered whether she thought that her taunt was the cause of his present stand. He was hurt to think that she might suppose an infusion of personal pique necessary to the strengthening of his moral fiber.

The days that followed were full of trial, but to all appearances he remained as self-assured and indifferent as ever. As soon as his quarrel with the president became known the students thronged his courses, expecting some vindication of his position or an address of farewell. But nothing of the kind occurred. When they began to realize that he intended to continue his work as usual their wonder was changed to admiration. At the close of one of his lectures he was startled by a spontaneous burst of applause.

He stood with his hands on the desk before him, looking down at the friendly, attentive faces with such an expression of astonishment that a ripple of laughter ran over the room. The moment of temptation had come. His heart was warmed by this unexpected sympathy. He saw June Hathaway sitting in her favorite seat by the window, her beautiful eyes fixed upon him with that enigmatical gaze which he had so often encountered from her since the eventful night when he kissed her in the snowstorm. Even then he was conscious of the fatal possibilities of that act. If she chose to tell of it his whole position would be invalidated. He had informed the president that a professor could not be discharged except for immorality or incompetence; he had certainly exposed himself and her to gossip, perhaps to scandal. He knew that she was hurt by his act, that she resented it bitterly, and yet he knew that he could trust her. His gratitude toward her was mingled with pain and vain longing. He had discovered her fineness only by proving himself un-

worthy of her. As his eyes met hers for one swift moment he was struck by her expression of concern for him, and his course grew clear before him.

"Young ladies and gentlemen," he said, at last, "it is not often that a teacher is rewarded by such an emphatic demonstration of approval as you have just given me. I am gratified that you have enjoyed this subject and thank you sincerely for your appreciation."

The turn was so unexpected, and his smile so infectious, that the class broke up with renewed laughter and applause. He felt that he owed it to June that he had not yielded to his first impulse to criticize the management of the university before the students and thus win a momentary cheap glory by sensational methods. He realized also that such a course would have left him no ground of resistance to the president's demand for his resignation. By a few rash words he might have expelled himself from the university. His eyes sought hers once more, but she had already risen to her feet and was passing out with the others. He followed her delicate profile until it was lost to view and then sat down and stared at the empty benches, suddenly weary. The victory she had helped him win seemed barren, deprived as he was of her congratulation. If she had only given him one fleeting smile he felt that he would have been satisfied.

Those who watched Lee closely during that time felt that he had grown suddenly older. His smile was no less quick, his answer no less ready, than before, but the glance of his gray eyes was shot with

a glint like that of tempered steel. He felt subtly alienated from his kind. Trumbull was gone, Mrs. Van Sant was inaccessible, and only the Everetts remained to whom he could open his heart.

At the faculty meeting Lee's name was omitted by the secretary when he called the roll. He knew that Babington would ignore him if he addressed the chair, and made no effort to speak. The president brought forward his favorite motion in regard to the entrance requirements, and Everett spoke against it as usual. With him alone, it seemed, the tragedy of Brown's strange death had lingered. As he stood before his colleagues they were conscious of that shadow on his face, the shadow of an abiding horror and doubt which even his wholesome nature could not entirely dispel. He seemed to have grown older and more gray. He could not quite persuade himself that he had done all that lay in his power for the man that was now beyond the need of his help; and this sub-consciousness gave his words a gravity and sternness which stirred the president to vague uneasiness and resentful protest. When he had finished no one else took the floor. Babington's pulses beat fast, and he hoped that the victory was won. There was a note of excitement and tension in the cries of "Question," which showed an unusual eagerness to put the matter to the test; but when the vote was taken the president's defeat was emphatic. Even the scientific men went over to the classical side for the time to show their sympathy with Lee. It was a curious battle, more intense than many a one attended with greater noise. The result

was so unexpected to the president that its effect on him was almost ludicrous. He seemed to shrink visibly, to become nerveless and ineffective before that expression of condemnation.

Not until the first of March did Babington play his trump card. It was pay-day in the university, and during the morning the members of the faculty went to the treasurer's office "to see the ghost walk."

"I'm sorry, Professor," the clerk said, as Lee signed the receipt for his check, "but next month there will be nothing for you. Those are my orders."

"Don't let that disturb you," was the cool answer. "Thirty days is a long time ahead to borrow trouble." He had read in the morning paper the news of Judge Gates' unexpected return, and he took the car for the capital at once.

"You've got yourself in a fine scrape while I've been gone, haven't you?" the old man demanded, as soon as they were alone.

"And you've returned just in time to cut the Gordian knot," Lee returned calmly.

"Tell me about it," the judge demanded, a gleam of amused approval in his vitreous eyes.

At the end of an hour he rose from his chair, having allowed the professor to do most of the talking.

"You're a chip of the old block, Nicholas," he said with a dry chuckle, "a chip of the old block. I wish your father were alive to enjoy this. I'll see what can be done, but I sha'n't make any promises."

Two days later there was a full attendance of the

meeting of the board of regents. Judge Gates sat in his old place at the foot of the table and talked of his travels while they waited for the president. The old regent seemed to have grown younger. His shrewd eyes sparkled, but there was more mischief than vitality in their cold gray light.

Presently Babington entered, somewhat winded by his climb up the stairs, and threw his bundle of reports on the table.

"Gentlemen," he began, "I must beg you to excuse me for keeping you waiting. Ah, Judge, I'm glad to see you back again. It seems like old times to have you at the council board once more."

He spoke in his most florid and cordial manner, but his eyes were furtive and alert as he advanced to shake hands with the regent. The judge's response to his greeting was scarcely heartening. His smile was somewhat sardonic, and he answered Babington's questions in regard to his travels with scant courtesy.

The atmosphere of the room was charged with expectation when the business of the meeting began. The president was visibly nervous, in spite of his efforts to appear hearty and unconcerned, for all his enemies, long absent, had returned. Something of unusual interest must have brought them there, and he suspected what it was. From time to time he caught a vindictive gleam in the eyes of the old man at the foot of the table.

The ordinary routine business was despatched without friction, and Babington felt a great relief.

After all, the full attendance was merely a compliment to Judge Gates and would fall off as before.

"Well, gentlemen," he remarked, smiling and beginning to gather up his papers, "I believe that ends the business of the day. A motion to adjourn is now in order." He arose from his seat and pushed back his chair.

No one made the motion, and all eyes were turned toward the foot of the table.

"Not yet," the judge announced. "There's another thing I'd like to bring up, if you please, Mr. President." His voice always had a grating quality that rasped sensitive nerves, and never had Babington's responded to the stimulus so quickly as now. He resumed his seat, his cheeks a trifle pale, his heart beating heavily.

"Certainly, Judge," he responded. There was the usual respectful emphasis on the regent's title, and no hint in his full, round tone of the anxiety that shook him suddenly like a fever.

"It's the matter of Professor Lee," the judge continued.

The president was able to smile blandly.

"Really, Judge," he answered courteously, "the dismissal or engagement of professors doesn't ordinarily come before the board. Of course, you may have forgotten that during your absence; but it was agreed, I believe, that I was to have the sole power and responsibility in such matters, to take the burden from the regents and to relieve them from the importunities of professors."

The judge waved his hand contemptuously, and there was a sparkle in his eyes that meant mischief.

"I know all that, Mr. Babington. I'm not so old that I'm beginning to lose my memory. I know we agreed that you were to be It, and you have been It with a vengeance. You've run the institution now to suit yourself for a year and a half, and I don't deny that you've shown some good results. I'm not disposed to say anything about Plow. I'd rather see him outside the university than in it, for he's as full of chimeras as he can stick in his skin. Of course, you had to get rid of the other men, too, or lose your grip on the machine. But Lee is a horse of a different color. He's a friend of mine, and I don't want to see him lose his position. He has explained the whole thing to me, and just how he happened to get into the papers. When Lee says a thing is so it's so, and you can depend upon it." He ended with more excitement than he had begun, bringing his fist down on the table and fairly glaring at the president.

"I didn't doubt his word, Judge," Babington interposed hurriedly. "There was a mere misunderstanding." He was on the defensive now and presented his side of the question to the meeting in its best light. The judge sat back in his chair and listened impatiently. Babington explained the dispute concerning the entrance requirements, and showed that the conservatism of Lee and Everett was keeping down the attendance, to the detriment of the university. It was a strong argument to use before a group of men of whom the majority were

not college graduates, men by training and experience hostile to the humanities. But he pleaded too well, and presently the judge interrupted.

"Numbers aren't everything, Mr. Babington, and the professors are overworked and underpaid as it is. The more students the more teachers, and our income will have to increase materially before we can expand to any great extent. I'm not alarmed about the attendance of the university. As for the Latin and Greek, I don't see why we shouldn't continue to demand them for the degree of Bachelor of Arts. We've invented three or four other degrees to fit the wants of the times. I'd like to see that one degree mean what it used to when I was in college. Even if we did lose a hundred students this year I don't think the way to make up the number is to let down the bars in that fashion."

Babington saw that no one was inclined to take his part, and that he must yield. His only concern now was to back down with what grace and dignity he could summon. He was still groping for a beginning when the judge continued.

"You'll excuse me for saying, Mr. Babington, that this trouble with the faculty has gone about far enough, in the opinion of the board. It's getting to be a scandal all over the country. I heard about it in New York, and of course I stood up for you. But it isn't right that all the papers in the country should be down on us. And here, too, the press is hostile. It never used to be so, and it must stop where it is."

As the president listened to these words he saw that his very position depended upon his yielding,

and his hatred of the man that had brought him to bay was almost more than he could endure. He longed to throw back the defiance of that hateful, triumphant gaze, even at the sacrifice of his ambition, but the impulse was abortive. The taste of his own medicine was bitter, but he swallowed it as best he could. In spite of all that could be said against the judge's character, and his record was none of the best, his victory over Babington was moral rather than brutal. It was this fact that made the president's attempt to maintain his dignity a pitiful pretense. He cleared his throat and looked at the faces about the long table, some amused, some embarrassed, some studiedly non-committal, some openly hostile.

"Of course, Judge, the fact that Professor Lee is a personal friend of yours puts another face on the question entirely. No one is more anxious than I to end the unhappy situation at the university, and I think we may consider the incident closed. With this exception, I am now in complete harmony with the faculty, and I do not doubt that Mr. Lee and I shall come to a better understanding and appreciation of each other. As a personal favor to you, Judge, I will reconsider my action and accept your suggestion."

"Call it that if you like," the regent retorted dryly. "Call it a suggestion if you like."

Babington smiled as if he had heard a jest rather than a taunt and once more gathered up his papers. At the action there was a general scraping of chairs, and the men stood up. The president bade them a

hasty good day and went out alone. Only after he had left the building did he remember that he had forgotten to save appearances at the end by proposing once more a motion to adjourn. The meeting had broken up spontaneously when his humiliation was complete, and his departure was like a flight.

he had attended in her house. That first conversation was very youthful in the retrospect; they never spoke of poetry now, and it seemed years since she had urged him to write it. She had gradually adapted herself to his changing character, not without inward protests, but she was not a man-reformer. She could scarcely tell at what time the scales had fallen from her eyes and she had looked at him with fatal comprehension. Something was gone between them which could not return. She would not have the element of romance restored, together with the torturing suspicion of pretense, and yet she felt the poorer for its loss. But could she be sure that it was gone for good? If she still cared to see him so much, might it not be possible that romance would return? Perhaps she was clinging to a girl's ideal, one never to be realized. Perhaps her doubt was merely the bitter fruit of the tree of knowledge of life. She shook off her meditations and came back to events.

"What was the real trouble with Professor Lee?" she asked. "One can't trust the papers, and I am so much interested. You know how fond I am of him." Her unaffected admission of attachment to Lee showed the president that his conjecture was correct. There had never been a romance between them.

"It was just a little misunderstanding," he answered in his frank manner, "magnified by the papers into an open breach. Naturally I was hurt that he should criticize me before reporters, and demanded an explanation. It appeared that he didn't

know a reporter was present, and that he wasn't talking for publication. Even so, I could scarcely treat him with the same cordiality after knowing what he thought of me."

"Of course not," she assented. "Then he isn't going to lose his position?"

The president laughed.

"Not a bit of it; that's all newspaper talk. At first I did ask for his resignation, naturally enough, for I supposed he could not care to teach in a university presided over by such a villain. It's all smoothed over now, and I hope he'll try to revise his unfavorable opinion of me."

There seemed to be no bitterness in his heart, and her eyes shone in admiration of his magnanimity. But a mocking doubt gave her pause. She knew of the long struggle between the two men; it was not thus that he usually spoke of his opponents. This was an extraordinary climax to a protracted duel in which she had noted increasing irritation and bitterness. But she had her own moods also. Perhaps something unusually pleasant had occurred to soothe him; perhaps he really respected Lee and was glad of the reconciliation; perhaps, and her heart was stirred by the thought, it was her own return that had worked the miracle.

"I can understand," she answered meditatively, "how strong a personal antagonism may become, and yet it seems strange to me that two men, both of whom I like so much, should dislike each other. But I'm glad he isn't going to lose his place; he's really so clever and so fond of the university. He

doesn't mean half what he says. I could have told you that."

The president suddenly leaned across the table and took her hand firmly in both his own. He had dared to obey his impulse, and the deed seemed strangely easy and natural, now that it was done.

"You're wise in your generation," he said, smiling his admiration. "I wish I had asked your advice before. I need such a woman for my guide, philosopher, and—wife. Will you?"

She struggled a moment to withdraw her hand, and then desisted.

"Mr. Babington," she demanded, "is this a business proposition?"

His heart leaped as he realized that she was not angry, but before he could frame a reply he saw the look in her eyes change. She rose quickly to her feet and swept by him, her silken skirts brushing his knees.

"Professor Plow," she cried, "this is an unexpected pleasure! You're just in time for a cup of coffee."

"Glad to hear it," Plow answered heartily. "I see you still stick to my old title. Hello!"

The last word was not a salutation, but an interjection of surprise, chagrin, anything but pleasure, for the president had risen to his feet. Mrs. Van Sant threw him an appealing glance.

"How do you do, sir?" Babington said, neither effusively nor coldly. Plow had recovered his composure and answered with equal brevity. Their ostess did not stop to see that there was something

comical in the way they eyed each other, like two great, dubious dogs. She deftly rolled a chair nearer the fire.

"Do be seated," she urged. "It's so cold out."

She controlled the trembling of her hands and poured a cup of coffee.

"I've forgotten how many lumps of sugar you take. There; I've put in three by mistake."

"I shall have to call this syrup," Plow remarked. "No, not another cup; I really like it sweet."

"Mrs. Van Sant is always generous to a fault," the president commented easily. He had recovered from the shock of the intrusion and was able to realize the strain and excitement underneath her apparent unconcern and cordiality. He looked at her with a sense of pride and possession as she talked on about the weather, the theater, anything that would make conversation, and he came to her aid as opportunity was presented.

The unwelcome visitor sat holding his cup and regarding them both with deep speculation in his inscrutable eyes. She saw the pain behind the mask, and her heart was touched. She felt that she could not be too cordial. The president divined her emotions and was not distressed. It was easy for him to be magnanimous now, and he was almost sorry for the intruder. This was his second and final triumph over his enemy. Plow must have divined the situation he interrupted and must now know that his daring hopes were fatuous. Babington even had a vague idea of making some amends for that incident on the road.

"I understand you will capture the Labor Union nomination for governor," he remarked, as if in friendly interest.

"That is for the convention to decide," Plow replied.

Mrs. Van Sant doubted the wisdom of Babington's lead, but struck in boldly.

"I know you will get it. If I were a man I should be a politician in preference to anything else. Don't you find it fascinating?"

"I like it," he answered briefly.

She felt that he had put her down, but her heart forgave him. She saw that her intuition was correct; the president had introduced an unfortunate subject, but she accounted it a blunder rather than a malicious intention. The professor never seemed more dignified than in his present self-containment. He must know that they thought the Labor Union party a forlorn hope of visionaries and malcontents. She herself did not believe that the traditional division between Republicans and Democrats could be broken up. No leader had yet been able to fuse the workingmen, as workingmen, into a victorious army, and she felt that Daniel Plow was not the man to do it. He had not saved the state for his party in the last campaign and she did not believe that he could win it for himself by deserting the Democrats and going over to the Labor Unionists. She had even shared Babington's amusement when the professor made a bid for popularity by joining the Blacksmiths' Union, but now that he was present she felt only the pathos of his

hopes. She gave the president a cautioning look, but he seemed strangely perverse or stupid.

"The Labor Union party has gained a victory in Connecticut, I see," he continued. "They've elected an Irish plumber mayor in one of their towns. They say he's an honest man."

He hoped to introduce a discussion in which he meant to conceal his own opinions and to be sympathetic, but Plow did not relish his air of patronage nor the reference to the plumber.

"An honest man," he echoed. "Impossible, in the case of a plumber." The jest was conventional, but Babington was disconcerted by the comprehending gaze that accompanied it. He understood that Plow knew his real opinions and his present intentions too well to allow the farce to continue and that he had no intention of exposing his soul before them. A flash of hostility passed between the men, and the air suddenly became charged with a tense excitement in which something extraordinary might happen. Mrs. Van Sant came to the rescue with a story of a plumber taken bodily from a comic paper, and the situation was saved.

The next half-hour seemed a lifetime to the hostess. Babington's geniality began to ebb from the time he felt himself worsted and scorned by the man he would have patronized, and he could scarcely keep up the pretense of helping her. He resented Plow's presence more and more, and Mrs. Van Sant's persistent cordiality became increasingly irritating. His impatient blood tingled to renew the situation in which he had been interrupted. The

He would have taken her hand, but she still held the china and did not appear to notice his impulsive gesture. He saw that further entreaty was useless, and left the room without another word.

CHAPTER XXVII

AN ANCHOR TO WINDWARD

The president did not cross Mrs. Van Sant's threshold again until he called to bid her good by for the summer. Pride and humiliation kept him away, and he waited for time to heal the estrangement. When he met her occasionally at other places he had reason to congratulate himself upon his method. The conventionalities fought for him at first, and finally he divined that her graciousness was not entirely conventional. By the simplest move in the game of love he succeeded in transferring the pique from his own heart to hers. Without analyzing her own motives more deeply, she was conscious that she had no desire to lose her hold on one of the most important men in the state. He must be brought back, if only to satisfy her vanity. And so he returned quite easily, as if nothing had occurred to drive him away.

The announcement of Mrs. Tupper's gift of two hundred thousand dollars for the new recitation hall had given Babington's second commencement an *éclat* scarcely inferior to the first, though his satisfaction was lessened by Everett's and Lee's continued success in regard to the entrance require-

ments. He allowed Mrs. Van Sant no glimpse of the bitterness of this check, however, nor did Plow's recent nomination for governor at the hands of the Labor Unionists provoke him to a word of comment. She had no need to exert herself to keep his farewell call within conventional limits, for he kept it there himself. He did not even ask if he might write to her. She was amused at his pretended indifference, and yet provoked that he had stolen her rôle. But he played the part too well, and she knew that distance would not lessen her hold on him. They parted with mutual good wishes for the summer, and as she watched him striding down the walk she thought of that other parting a year before, not without a touch of wistfulness and an admiration for his pride and finesse.

Professor Plow captured the Labor Union convention, and the convention felt that it had captured him. His winter of quiet work had not been in vain, and his organization was so complete that the result of the ballot was a foregone conclusion. The Labor Unionists were proud of their candidate; they felt that he was one of them. He had risen by his own efforts to a high position in the educational world, he had been thrown from that position because he championed the workers' rights, and now he was to be their standard-bearer against the proud man's contumely wherever found.

They appreciated his university connection, a connection that would have injured the chances of another kind of man. Plow had early turned the handicap into an advantage. The many friends

he had unwittingly made by his lectures in previous years now rose up to hail him as their leader and deliverer. During all those years he had never talked down to them; they had never been conscious that he considered himself their superior, though they felt a difference that he would have been the first to disclaim.

The university, after all, had set its mark on him and invested him with a peculiar claim to respect. He was of all men most approachable, and yet there was an invisible line, invisible even to himself, which no one ventured to cross. The story of his life was a romance that appealed to the rank and file. The mysterious, lambent glow of the blacksmith's forge seemed still to linger in his eyes; his sympathies were still with the men of the factory and the shop and the farm; yet his manner of expression was not theirs. He appealed to them as an example of what any one of their class might become when all had their rights; in a word, they felt that he was a gentleman.

Moreover, when Plow came into the ranks of the Labor Unionists he came bearing his sheaves with him. Many enthusiastic young alumni of the university, his old students, followed in his wake, and he used them in various ways. Some of them he sent to make speeches from trucks at the corners of the streets; some he used to disseminate campaign literature; from some he exacted a substantial contribution to the campaign fund; and some he suppressed for the good of the party.

Not all came in the spirit of their leader. A few

young lawyers, disappointed in their previous political ambitions, coolly estimated Plow's chances and threw in their lot with him for personal gain. It was no easy task to weld this infusion into the original mass, but the hand at the bellows blew them all into a glowing fire of enthusiasm. The original men of the party, the men that had borne the burden and heat of the day, were given to understand that those who came at the eleventh hour would not receive the same political penny with themselves. When this became known some of the new aspirants withdrew in disgust; others remained, some to work for love of the cause and its leader, others in hope of a ha'penny if denied the whole.

Before the campaign was a month old the skeptical began to wonder and doubt. *The Times,* after a few days of uncertainty between the Democrats and the Labor Unionists, came out flat-footed for the latter and nailed Plow's banner to its flagstaff. The candidate had learned his lesson. He knew now that too many planks spoiled the political platform, and he confined his attention to the wrongs of the working men. There was no talk of free silver, and the only imperialism mentioned was the imperialism of the trusts.

As the summer wore on Babington heard incredulously from a distance of the changing spirit of the political battle in the west. The impression was gaining ground that this was the year of the nder dog. The Republicans had nothing to conibute to state issues; the Democratic party had

become a Cassandra still droning to deaf ears an ancient prophecy of disaster; but the Labor Unionists were compact, explicit, desperate. They meant to elect a governor and a legislature that would do something for them there in the state. It would be time enough to discuss national issues during the next national campaign.

Babington had attended the annual meeting of the Ethnological Society, he had interviewed new candidates for his faculty, he had visited his friends, and was spending the remnant of his vacation at a fashionable summer resort. As he sat on the veranda of his hotel he looked lazily over the sea and read his favorite New York paper, the clever preacher of the gospel of good humor. He chuckled as he read the occasional skits and fleers at Plow which appeared in those columns. The professor was traveling through the state under a tent pitched on a flatcar, and the paper waxed merry over the greatest political circus on earth, over Dan Plow, the presto-change artist, the octopus-smasher, the trust-buster, the megaphone of flubdub.

These comments made Plow's cause ridiculous in the president's eyes. In the copies of *The Times* which reached him he read some of the candidate's speeches and thought them as flat as the car from which they were spoken. He was himself an effective speaker and had cultivated a verbal dexterity that passed for wit. He confused Plow's heavy person with his mind, and could not appreciate the rich vein of native humor in his enemy that made his jokes so dear to the people. Be-

hind the cold print he could not see the whimsical gleam of those mysterious eyes; he failed to catch the swing and power of the passionate appeals.

Only when he traveled westward in September did the din of the political battle take on another and more threatening sound. Within the borders of the state he looked from the car windows and saw Plow's banner hung across the streets of the towns through which he passed. His fellow passengers, the very brakemen and porters, were prophesying or fearing a Labor Union victory, as their respective interests dictated. At the capital the atmosphere of feverish excitement was intensified. The flags and banners of the rival candidates gave the city a holiday appearance. Staid business men walked the streets with anxious faces, as if in the shadow of impending disaster; but the working men seemed to step jauntily, anticipating the imminent day of their emancipation.

Babington was glad to bury himself in Argos and to divert his mind with the numerous duties that crowded in upon him. He scarcely read the daily accounts of Plow's speeches, and refused to think of the possibility of his election. He was like an ostrich hiding its head in the sand. When Mrs. Van Sant returned he went to her as to a refuge in time of trouble. Plow had openly attacked him in several of his speeches, but he allowed no impatient word against his enemy to escape him in her presence. Only he and Fyffe, when alone, joined in damning him beyond redemption. He saw that she did not think Plow would win,

and his own confidence was restored. He felt that his self-control was not without its effect upon her, and that his long penance was drawing to an end. It was as if everything were still unsaid between them, as if everything were still possible.

Mrs. Tupper was less comforting. He had never known her so querulous and captious. One day, about a fortnight before the election, he received a summons from her, and he went over to the capital to find her in a state of panic. She walked up and down the room, a green worsted shawl drawn tightly about her shoulders, and talked more savagely, more wildly, than he had ever heard her talk before. As he sat and looked at her he was conscious of the ghastly effect of the green shawl against her yellow cheeks. Her long fight against ill health had been in vain, and she looked ten years older than when he first saw her. Only her indomitable will to live kept her from her bed, and excitement, not strength, supported her trembling limbs.

"I tell you, Professor," she cried, her thin lips twitching, "that man will be elected. I feel it in my bones. I've followed many a campaign, and you can't fool me. I wouldn't have believed it last June, but the people are going crazy over him. He's promised to pension all the old working men, and to give them all a share in the 'public utilities,' as he calls them. That means a share in the things I own. He calls that sort of robbery Christianity and justice. He says the early Christians were socialists. Socialists indeed!"

As Babington listened his heart misgave him. All the accumulated fear he had not admitted to himself now broke over the barrier he had built up against it and came flooding in upon him. He faced the possibility of Plow's victory and what it would mean to him.

"That will be the end of everything," she cried. "If that anarchist becomes governor he'll rob me of every last cent, and I shall die in the poorhouse. What shall I do? What shall I do?"

Babington's round eyes held a look of irritation and contempt. It was sheer perversity for her to talk about the poorhouse when she knew that the interest of the two hundred thousand dollars which she first gave to the university would be paid her as long as she lived. Either she was perverse, or else she was losing her mind.

"Come, come, Mrs. Tupper," he said soothingly, "you excite yourself unnecessarily. Suppose he is elected. It's much harder to change the laws than his constituents think. He won't carry out his promises, anyhow. That talk is just political thunder. If his principles ever triumph I believe they have some scheme for buying the public utilities; they don't propose to confiscate them. He's not really an anarchist, you know, and his gang can't interfere with invested rights and private property."

"I don't know about that," she retorted shrilly, never pausing in her walk. "They'll try, and they can do something, I know. I shall be robbed, as I always have been. What shall I do?"

He saw that she was in one of her periodic pan-

ics about money matters, and realized anew the strength of her infatuation for himself. It must have been wonderfully strong to prevail against the instincts of the miser. The struggle between her growing fear of poverty and the love that made her give him money was killing her. He exerted himself to show that her fears were baseless, and finally his efforts were successful. She sank into her chair, exhausted.

"But what about yourself, Professor?" she asked. "I ain't thinking about myself altogether; it's you I'm thinking about at the same time. What can he do to you if he gets governor?"

"That's just it," he rejoined bitterly. "He can turn me out."

She almost shrieked in sudden fury and alarm. "He can't! I won't let him! I've got something to say about it. How can he?"

He drew his chair nearer the fire and looked moodily into the flames.

"I'll tell you how the matter stands," he answered. "Just at present I have a bare majority of the regents on my side. There are fifteen in all, and I can ordinarily count on eight to stand by me. Even they are uncertain since Gates came back. At least seven would be glad to see me go. The term of three of my friends expires just after the new governor, whoever he is, takes his seat. The governor has the power of appointment, and if Plow is elected he will put in three of his own men, making a majority of ten to five against me. They won't be a week asking for my resignation, and I'll have to give it."

During this explanation she sat looking at him with strained attention, her yellow forehead wrinkling and her heavy brows quivering above her eager eyes.

"And that's what he's been up to all this time," she remarked grimly. "I didn't think he was so smart. But we'll beat him yet. We've got to think up some scheme. He don't take his seat till March, does he? That gives one time to turn around."

"It's only a postponement," he replied.

"Can't you bring some of your enemies over?" she suggested shrewdly. "Who's at the head of 'em?"

"Judge Gates; he has been my enemy from the first. He has organized the opposition to a man, and I can't break it up. The governor is too anxious trying to win his reëlection to give me a thought, and he never did attend the meetings of the board. As for Gates, I've done everything I could think of to please him. I backed down in that Lee affair, but it's no use. The old fox is conducting a long, still hunt. I believe he hates me enough to want Plow to win, much as he hates Plow. He's got Everett slated for my place. That's the game."

"That old fool!" she exclaimed, with a sniff of contempt. Then she came back to the problem. "You're sure Plow will do that?" You're perfectly sure?"

"As sure as he's elected he'll do it, and I begin

to think he will be. Whenever he has had a chance to make capital out of his dismissal he hasn't left a shred to my reputation. You know that; you've read what he had to say."

"I wish he was dead before me!" she flamed out, beginning to resume her restless pacing of the room. "I could buy them," she muttered. "I could buy and sell them, but what's the use? It's just throwing good money after bad. I won't do it; I won't be such a fool."

Suddenly she stopped by his side and placed a hand on his shoulder.

"Professor," she said, in a low, trembling voice, "I want to tell you something. I'm not going to give another cent to that university of yours. I hate it. I only gave it for your sake, but I won't give a cent more, not a cent. What do I care about the university? It's you I care about. You can have it all." She broke into a nervous spasm of laughter and tears, and her last words were scarcely articulate. "You can have it all, Professor, if you'll take me."

He had anticipated this moment. He had even considered seriously this final refuge. If he lost his position he could have this great house and the handling of her millions. Besides, she could not live long. He would soon be free to follow his own ambitions or pleasures. He would be a rich man, and he loved riches more than anything else in the world. But, as far as he could love any woman, he loved Mrs. Van Sant. He thought of her now,

and could not speak. But not only that. His physical repulsion from the old woman at his side was almost a nausea.

She saw his hesitation and sprang away from him with a cry that smote his heart with a thrill of strange foreboding. Her thin, gray hair fell about her shoulders and she resumed her rapid, swaying walk, back and forth, back and forth, her face crimson with shame and fury, crying and laughing in a breath. He had never before seen a woman in the grip of hysteria, and sat looking at her in speechless horror. He thought she had gone mad. She seemed like nothing so much as an ancient Erinys masquerading in modern motley.

"It's because you want that little red-headed minx," she chattered wildly, "and you think I'm an old woman. I could kill her! I ought to have killed her when she was a little brat. I always felt in my bones that she would bring this upon me. I know I'm a devil, but it's because there's a little red devil running around in my head. I feel it running round and round. Oh, oh! my head will split!"

Her voice rose to a scream, and he sprang from his chair in terror. He seized and held her firmly by both her arms. She swayed and would have fallen had it not been for his support.

"Mrs. Tupper," he cried, "stop this at once! Control yourself!"

She seemed nothing but skin and bones beneath her heavy dress, and he could have lifted her bodily from the floor with scarcely an effort. His voice

and touch calmed her, though she moaned still, her head rolling from side to side.

"I'm going to die! I know I'm going to die. You'll kill me!"

"You're not going to die," he answered. "You're going to live—with me."

She opened her eyes wide and darted him a look of exultation. The next moment she was in his arms, in an apparent swoon. He laid her on the lounge and rang the bell furiously. The servant came in, and together they carried Mrs. Tupper up to her room. As he laid her on the bed she caught one of his hands to her lips and kissed it.

"You're so kind," she murmured. "I'll be better soon."

He shivered at the touch of her lips and drew away.

"Make her comfortable," he said to the girl, "and bring her some brandy. I'm going for a doctor."

"No, no," the old woman protested; "I won't have a doctor. I won't be robbed by a doctor."

"You shall have one," he answered sternly, moving toward the door. "I insist upon it."

She threw him a look of coquetry and yielding, and he went out like one stealing away from the scene of a crime.

[illegible] speak. But not only that. His [illegible] the old woman at his side [illegible].

[illegible] and sprang away from [illegible] his heart with a thrill [illegible]. Her thin, gray hair fell about [illegible] resumed her rapid, swaying [illegible] back and forth, her face [illegible] and laughing in a [illegible] never before seen a woman in the [illegible] at her in speech- [illegible] she had gone mad. She [illegible] as an ancient Erinys [illegible].

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CHAPTER XXVIII

FORTUNE'S DARLING

The president looked at Professor Fyffe through the smoke of his cigar.

"Yes," he said meditatively, "it was very sudden to most people, but I had suspected for some time that Mrs. Tupper could not last long. To think that I saw her only eight days ago, and yesterday she was buried! She had a fainting spell that day. I had thought for some time that her heart was affected."

"It was very sudden, though, at the last, was it not?" Fyffe inquired with a subdued and sympathetic air.

"Yes, for she seemed to be getting better. But that's the way with heart disease. You can never tell. Four days ago she got up and dressed. The servant says she walked about the house and seemed stronger than she had been for some time. When she went to bed she refused to have the fire lighted, and kept the windows open. She passed away some time during the night."

The professor shivered and extended his hands to the open fire. Babington sat silent, haunted by a picture of that tragic and lonely death; the cold

starlight beyond the dim squares of the open windows, the slow coming of the November dawn, the gruesome discovery of the servant in the morning. It filled him with peculiar repulsion and horror to remember his last scene with her. He lacked the imagination to see the deeper pathos of her waiting for his step on the stair, her longing for the sound of his voice once more; or he saw it only as through a glass darkly, and then turned away in fear. At last he started up and shook off the spell that had fallen on him.

"I've got something here," he said, "of the right sort. A drop of this will make us take a more cheerful view of life. After all, she was an old lady, and what more natural than that the old should die?"

He filled two glasses and they drank in silence. The professor lighted a cigar and looked about the room with a smile of recovered spirits. The fire was warm, the lamps glowed brightly, the whiskey and cigars were good.

"That's all right," he commented. "I must get some of that for myself. Somehow, you always manage to discover the best brands of everything. It's just as you say; you're a true philosopher. There's a time for everything, even for dying, and the ripe fruit must fall. Only, in this case, it seemed more like a withered russet apple blown off the branch by a cold autumn wind and rain. It gave me the creeps, somehow." He puffed his cigar a while and then resumed: "There ought to be something in the will for the university. She

had no heirs that I know of except that scapegrace of a stepson who disappeared some years ago, and there wasn't a single relative at the funeral."

"Mrs. Van Sant was very good," the president remarked. "She stepped in and took charge of everything."

The professor nodded.

"It's like her. She had known Mrs. Tupper for a long time. She has a practical genius; when there's anything to be done she does it. But what do you think of our chances?"

The president had thoughts of his own on that subject which he did not care to communicate even to his only friend.

"I don't know," he answered. "They must have opened the will to-day, and to-morrow we shall find out. I'm more interested just now in the outcome of this election." He looked nervously at his watch. "Here it is past eight o'clock, and I don't get any definite news yet. It has been dribbling in for two hours, now this way, now that."

The telephone bell rang sharply and he stepped into the hall, leaving the door open. Fyffe listened intently to the president's words and endeavored to guess the character of the news from the capital. Presently Babington came back into the room and poured out another drink.

"Confound him," he said irritably. "The report was bad. I fancy the fellow has been trying to let me down easy. Help yourself."

Fyffe accepted the invitation and looked up with his grotesque but infectious smile:

"Thou hast called me thy friend in thy moments of bliss,
And thy friend I will be through the horrors of this."

Babington laughed at the nimble misquotation. He always found Fyffe a refuge. The professor knew that the time to hold out false hopes had passed and suddenly grew serious.

"Never mind," he said. "Let us concede the election; I don't think you need worry. I'm sure Mrs. Tupper will leave us millions. The regents will appreciate what you have done for the university. You've got us more money in two years than all the other presidents we ever had. You've brought order out of chaos and weeded out the men who made the trouble. You've got new men of ability and breeding. There's Tupper Hall, the finest building on the campus, and, in spite of Everett and Lee, this year's freshman class was larger than last year's."

Babington caught his spirit and smiled significantly.

"We'll see what can be done with Plow's new regents."

The professor nodded knowingly. He poured a little ginger ale into his whiskey and sipped the mixture with appreciation.

"If Mrs. Tupper has remembered us, as I know she has, you can prove to them that their best interests lie in siding with you; I don't care who they are." Fyffe's words carried conviction.

The president became pompous and confident. "I hope the blacksmith is elected," he declared. "It will be all the more interesting." His jaw was squared, and there was an ugly glint in his eyes. "I think we can show him something about politics he doesn't know."

"He'll tie himself up in a tangle of blunders before he's in office a month," said Fyffe. "His sooty constituents will demand impossibilities. You can stave off the action of the regents until his influence is on the wane, and then everything will come your way. He'll soon have the whole heterogeneous rabble of his followers howling for his blood, and after two years out he goes." He grinned sardonically and flicked the ashes from his cigar as if he were consigning Plow to the flames by the action.

"It takes something better than a charlatan," the president observed, "to keep the support of the people. They'll get tired of listening to the wind of his bellows." The large vein in Fyffe's forehead pulsed with amusement and he took the liberty of filling both the glasses. "Your health, Mr. Babington. It's good stuff, and deserves encouragement."

Babington bit off the end of a new cigar and lighted it.

"I used that whiskey once in a religious discussion. You knew of old Doctor Hyde—hell fire and all that sort of thing, quite logical from A to Z. About two o'clock in the morning I made him

confess that his position was purely professional. He went to bed a Universalist."

"And woke up a worse Calvinist than ever, I'll be bound," Fyffe retorted.

There was a moist twinkle in the president's eyes.

"Probably, for his next Sunday's sermon was lurid, but he saw Beulah Land for once in his life. Hello, there's the bell again."

Fyffe refilled the glasses when the president left the room.

"What's that?" Babington cried. "You're sure? By how much?"

There was a short silence.

"From ten to fifteen thousand? Thank you."

Fyffe knew that he was asking Plow's plurality, but he was past caring. Fifteen thousand or fifty, it was all one to him. But Babington was talking again.

"Yes, you might quote me as saying that the result is no surprise to me. Mr. Plow made a splendid fight and deserved to win. What's that? No, I have nothing to say upon the political aspect of the election. I take no part in politics. Of course, I am gratified that a former professor of the university has been so honored by the people of the state. Good night."

He hung up the ear-drum, cutting the colloquy short, and came back into the study with a black look on his face. He seized his glass recklessly and drained it to the bottom. The draft was strong,

and he shivered and spluttered as he poured out a drink of water.

"There's one thing," he remarked. "During this whole campaign I haven't said a word. I've let Plow do all the talking. He thinks he's got me now, but that remains to be seen."

About eleven o'clock they heard a confusion of cries, cheers and laughter in front of the house, and Babington rose unsteadily to his feet.

"It's the students," he muttered. "I'll make them a speech. I'll show them I don't care."

Fyffe seized his arm in protest and endeavored to drag him back to his chair.

"Don't do it," he entreated. "It's better to let them alone. That's a crowd of Plow's sympathizers. They've been over to the capital watching the returns. They're not your friends."

The president wrenched himself free and backed up against the wall.

"Mr. Fyffe," he said with solemnity, "you take great liberties. I know what I'm about."

"Mr. Babington," the professor retorted, "you must pardon me for suggesting that you're not yourself. I'm not myself. We've had a little to drink, and the room is warm. I wouldn't go out if I were you."

"You wouldn't, Mr. Fyffe?" Babington's eyes glowed redly. "But you and I are two very different persons. Thank you. I'm not myself; you're very kind to remind me."

He swayed toward the door and threw it open.

Derisive shouts from the front yard came echoing through the hall: "Speech! Speech!"

"I'll give them a speech," Babington growled. But Fyffe had him by the arm once more. He whirled about and swung himself loose.

"Mr. Fyffe," he said savagely, "you've insulted me once too often. Your connection with the university is at an end, sir."

He turned and made his way down the hall, pursued by his faithful satellite. The professor, more accustomed to alcohol than the other, realized the situation perfectly. He had no fear of losing his position, and was bent on saving the president's honor. Babington seized the baluster at the top of the stairs and went smoothly down, in spite of yielding knees. Fyffe followed closely, frantic with anxiety.

"You'll thank me to-morrow. Only stop before it's too late!" he cried.

The president, fumbling with the chain of the door, paid no heed. The crowd without saw his shadow on the thick glass and sent up a mighty shout. The professor seized the president's hand in one last effort, and poured forth unavailing protests. Babington shouldered him aside with unconscious strength, and sent him sprawling on the floor. Then the door swung wide, and he stood exposed to view.

The shouts and laughter that greeted his ears were deafening. He did not know that the little professor was picking himself up from the floor

behind him, and the noise filtered through his befogged brain as a cry of welcome. He felt an impulse to do something jovial and friendly. He would be a good fellow, as at the football game; he would be humorous and show them that he took everything in good part. He tried to swing his hat, forgetting that his head was bare, and gave an answering cheer. All this in the first moment. In the next Fyffe had risen to his feet. The students saw the figure of Miss Babington, clad in a bathrobe, come hurrying from the back of the hall. The two seized the president and forced him back. The door was slammed shut, and the shadows disappeared from the glass.

A hush fell on the rabble outside. They were composed, for the most part, of the president's enemies, and had come in a spirit of mischief to shout before his door, safe in the protection of the darkness. Now they slunk away, abashed. Some said that Fyffe was drunk, others that he had fallen by accident. Almost no one suspected the truth about the president. The whole incident had taken but a few moments. Their own noise had drowned Babington's cheer, and he had steadied himself with his left hand against the jamb of the door. It was the ludicrous figure of the president's sister that brought them to their senses. There was none who did not like that simple and kindly spinster, and they respected her interference in her brother's behalf.

Babington was sitting on the lowest step of the stair, his head on his hands, and his sister knelt

beside him. Not a word was spoken until the students had disappeared; then the professor took his hat and coat from the rack and slipped out with a brief good night. Neither of them appeared to notice his departure.

"Oh, Henry," she cried, "how could you?"

He raised his bloodshot eyes and looked at her remorsefully.

"The room was close," he said. "It went to my head for a few minutes. I'll know better next time."

She ignored the explanation, and continued, weeping:

"I've been watching you for a long time, Henry, and I knew that man was having a bad influence on you. He has been your tempter from the first. You never used to drink."

"And never will again," he declared, rising. A sudden irritation swept over him. "Let me alone, Carrie!" he burst out. "I know what you would say, but I won't listen. I won't have it. I've got enough to worry me without your spying and lecturing and making a tragedy out of an accident." He took hold of the baluster and began to ascend the stairs.

"Won't you let me make you a cup of coffee?" she suggested meekly. He glared down on her in a fury.

"No; mind your own business and go to bed. What do I want of a cup of coffee?"

He went back to his own study, feeling like one of the damned. Shame, fear, humiliation, anger,

buffeted him this way and that. He put away the bottles and glasses and threw the cigar butts into the fire. Then he opened the window wide and leaned out into the cool night air, his head throbbing. The odor of whiskey and tobacco had become intolerable to him, and he felt that he could never touch them again.

Later, he sat by the fire in his easy chair and tried to take a reckoning of his position. He had a confused memory of having spoken to Fyffe of Mrs. Van Sant and Mrs. Tupper, and could not recall just where he had drawn the line of confidence. The conversation with a reporter at the telephone returned to haunt him. At what stage of the evening was it, and what had he said? He would know only when he should see the paper in the morning. During that long night he slept fitfully in his chair, and awoke at last with an aching head. The fire had gone out in the grate, but one of the lamps still burned smokily, impregnating the room and mingling its yellow light oddly with the grayness of the dawn.

For some time he lay in a semi-conscious condition wondering whether he had spent the night in the seat of a railroad train. He had felt so in his early days, before he could afford the luxury of a berth in a sleeper, when the dawn found him stiff and sore, looking with smarting eyes at the hurrying landscape. His hopes and fears came back upon him with a rush, and he sprang to his feet. The motion sent a wave of pain to the top of his head, and caused him to step softly. He put

out the lamp and looked at his watch. The paper must be even now on the porch. He gazed over the campus, steaming in the melancholy autumn rain, and feared to go down to learn his fate.

When at last he summoned courage to go downstairs and open the door he saw *The Times* flapping in the breeze at his feet. He picked it up and ran over the headlines in a feverish haste. There was Plow's picture, the picture of the next governor, and there was the account of his victory. All this he already knew. He sought for his own words and found them. They expressed just what he wished, and he breathed a sigh of relief. Best of all, there was no reference to the demonstration at his door the previous night. He began to feel that the fates were still with him, as they had always been, and turned to the inside pages with a hope that was almost expectation. Suddenly it flashed upon his eyes:

MRS. TUPPER'S WILL.
President Babington Gets the Bulk of the Widow's Millions.
A Few Small Bequests to Distant Relatives.
Nothing for the State University.

As he read the last line his tense emotion gave way to a sense of the ridiculous, and he laughed aloud. The university had nothing. It was all his to do with as he would. He could bribe enough regents for his purposes, no matter whom Plow might appoint. And there was no embarrassing

reference in the will to himself, as Mrs. Tupper's *fiancé*. It was dated some time before his last interview with her, and Mrs. Van Sant would never know his secret. Surely his millions were worth more than Plow's precarious popularity, his two short years of office. She would not refuse him now. It was this thought that filled his cup of joy and triumph to overflowing. He laughed again, and turning to the front page of the paper he drove his fist straight through his enemy's face so that it came out on the other side.

CHAPTER XXIX

A FRANK UNDERSTANDING

The president sat in his study after breakfast and smoked a cigar without a thought of his last night's resolve. A hot bath, a change of raiment, two cups of strong coffee, and, above all, joy had put his headache to flight. He opened his morning mail and found the lawyer's formal notification of his good fortune. There was also a letter of congratulation from Fyffe, brought by a special messenger. Babington knew that he had nothing to fear from the professor, no matter what he might have said. Fyffe was too much of a gentleman to remember confidences spoken over the cups, and besides it was to his advantage to keep silent. A glorious day was before him; many things claimed his attention, but first he would sit alone a while and try to realize the extent of his triumph. He felt that he was Fortune's darling, one born to lucky chances and destined to step on the neck of his enemies. He was light-headed and giddy. His whole being burned with exultation, but his hands were cold and the nerves in his wrists quivered. The fire had been rekindled, and he drew up his chair to the blaze.

He had not told his sister the news as yet, partly because he still resented her reproaches of the previous night, and partly from an intuition that she would be puzzled, even dismayed, by the unexpected windfall. She never read the paper until ten o'clock, at which time the wheels of the domestic machinery were running smoothly and she could allow herself a short respite. Even then she often turned by preference to the woman's weekly to which she subscribed. She enjoyed the stories and cooking recipes of that popular periodical, and regarded *The Times* as an enemy lying in wait for her with some wicked criticism of her brother.

Babington's day-dream was interrupted by a light rap at the door, and his sister entered, breathless with excitement.

"Henry," she gasped, "who do you suppose wants to see you?"

"Who?" he demanded.

"Plow!"

The president gave a start, and his face paled. What could the man want? It was almost beyond belief. He had expected a protracted struggle, and felt that he was supplied with all the munitions of war, but the immediate prospect of a meeting face to face gave him a shock of something like fear. His first impulse was to excuse himself, but his second was one of eagerness for the interview. He reflected that Plow had come to him, as an inferior comes to see a superior. Doubtless he realized that his enemy's good fortune was greater than his

own, and had come to make peace. After all, he was the governor-elect and a man of importance. Babington was not unwilling to compromise. He resolved to meet him half-way and to assume that their relationship was one of cordial coöperation. This was probably what Plow desired. It was to their mutual interest to bury the hatchet. All things considered, Babington felt that the advantages of the situation were on his side.

"I'll see him in this room," he said at last.

"Won't you go down, Henry?" she suggested.

He looked at her with contempt. Evidently she did not appreciate their relative positions.

"No," he said coldly. "Send him up here. And, Carrie, mind you let the maid show him the way. I suppose you opened the door yourself. I wish you could learn not to perform the duties of your own servants."

Miss Babington flushed with mortification and resentment, but the habit of obedience was strong and she went to do his bidding.

It was characteristic of the governor-elect that he should come to see Babington the morning after his election, without stopping to weigh the relative official importance of the president of the state university and himself. He had no little difficulty in reaching his destination. A hundred claimants to his attention blocked his way. On the campus of the university his old colleagues stopped him to offer their congratulations. The students gathered in crowds and cheered. The entrance that he had made so unpretentiously became an ovation, a triumphant re-

turn from exile. He refused to respond to the students' demand for a speech, but continued on his way with a smile of whimsical appreciation of the turning of the tables. It was in this place that he had dropped from sight almost unnoticed in the greater interest aroused by a football game. Then a hundred students had stood by him; now he was apparently the hero of the university. Within a few minutes the whole campus was in a buzz of excited speculation. Plow had entered the president's house, and conjecture ran the whole gamut from a probable duel in the drawing-room to an affecting reconciliation.

When Babington heard his visitor's step in the hall he arose and threw open the door with a smile of welcome and an outstretched hand of congratulation. But Plow was holding his hat in one hand and his umbrella in the other. He did not seem to observe the president's intention, but stalked into the room with a brief good morning, and took a chair by the fire. Babington was somewhat disconcerted by the awkwardness of the meeting, but attributed it to his visitor's ill breeding and sat down, as yet undeceived.

"Mr. Plow," he began smoothly, "allow me to congratulate you upon your election. I take a special pride, as president of the university, in the fact that one of our former professors has won the highest honor in the gift of the people of the state."

Even as he was speaking his habitual quickness of perception made him conscious of a difference in his visitor. He was no longer the unworldly

professor or the eccentric reformer. The great experience through which he had passed had left its stamp upon him.

"Thank you," he said dryly, a satirical humor lighting his eyes. "I read what you had to say about the election in this morning's paper." He paused a moment, collecting his thoughts, and then continued as if he were addressing a situation rather than a man. "I came over this morning because I want you to know as soon as possible just what our relationship is. I don't want you to entertain any false ideas of my intentions. Possibly you may not care to continue in your present position, now that you are independent, and it may be that you intend to resign of your own accord. I hope such is the case, for it will save unnecessary friction."

The president's nerves, already sensitive from the experiences of the night and morning, responded like electric wires to a sudden current of emotion. The cool assumption of the man he hated and despised was maddening. He had expected a petitioner and encountered a dictator. The habit of arrogance had become too deeply fixed to be sloughed in a moment, and impulse carried him away before policy could find a place in his mind. The old irresistible personal antagonism flamed up anew, and he fairly snapped out his retort.

"I have no intention of resigning, Mr. Plow." His expression asked unmistakably, "What are you going to do about it?" and the question was answered as if it had been articulate.

"I think it would be the wiser course; it would save you the humiliation of being asked to go."

The eyes of the governor-elect were glowing like two bright coals. The president had broken the pretense of impersonal dealing as if it were a window of colored glass between them, and each looked at the face of his enemy undisguised.

"I shall not be asked to go, and I will not go," Babington sneered.

"Yes, you will," Plow retorted. "I might as well be perfectly frank with you. It's not my way to work in the dark. Just as soon as I take my seat and appoint my regents they will ask for your resignation. I have them pledged to it, and they will stand by their word. It will be my business, as president of the board of regents, to look out for the best interests of the university, and those interests are not promoted by hypocrisy and money-worship. You've had your innings long enough, and the time has come for you to make way for a better man."

"Everett, for instance?" There was an indescribable sting in the president's quizzical manner, and Plow responded as to the cut of a lash.

"It makes no difference who the man is; it's enough that there is one. I knew that you knew my moves, and you knew that I knew yours. Then what was the use of that pretense and congratulation? Did you think that I was going to congratulate you in turn upon your millions, and stand hand in glove with you, now that you are rich?"

He spoke in hot scorn, his hand grasping the arm of his chair until his knuckles shone white, but now

he made a great effort and continued more calmly. "I am trying to keep my own personal feelings out of this, but it's against human nature. Yet I hope I could overlook everything else if you really had a good influence on the students of the university, but you haven't. They are easily fooled by position and plausible speeches. You've taught them to despise their teachers; you've given them practical lessons in the art of humbug. It's for their sake that I'm determined you shall go. There are some things your money can't buy. You can't buy me, and you can't buy those regents, though I know well enough that's what you're planning."

"Mr. Plow," Babington cried, rising, his face white with passion, "this is an insult I won't endure. It comes with a pretty poor grace from a man who has got himself elected governor of the state by just exactly the tricks he ascribes to me."

Plow sprang to his feet in turn and advanced to within a foot of his enemy.

"You don't mean it," he said distinctly, "you know you don't. You know I mean well by the people. I may make mistakes at times, but I'm no trickster, and you know it. If I really insulted you, why didn't you knock me down? It was because you knew I spoke the truth; so you gave me a lie instead of a blow."

It was a long time since Babington's course of life had fostered physical courage. As a college boy, and catcher of the baseball nine, he would have obeyed the promptings of the primitive man, but now it was impossible. It was Plow that stood in

all the glory of his healthy and mature manhood, ready and unafraid. The fury of the other only unnerved him. His heart beat at his ribs as if it would burst, and his hands were helpless. At that crucial moment he could only sneer.

"I'm not a barbarian, nor a blacksmith."

Plow's hands clenched, as in a spasm, but his voice was still curiously low.

"No, you're not; you've spoken the truth for once. You're not a blacksmith; you're only a hypocrite and a sycophant. That's the trade by which you won your money, the money with which you thought you could buy me. You got money from one woman to buy the love of another, but you'll find you can't do that either."

Babington burst into a taunting laugh.

"So that's what your championship of virtue amounts to, is it? I begin to see what lies behind all this talk of protecting the students from my bad influence. Of course, your successful rival in love must be a villain. I see now why you had the presumption to walk into a lady's house unannounced and interrupt my visit with my *fiancée*."

"No!" Plow's cry was one of agony, and seemed to rend him. For a moment he stood as one stricken. Then a great light blazed in his eyes. His hand shot out and gripped his tormentor by the throat. The impetus of the attack bore the president against the wall. He would have cried out, but for the relentless fingers of his enemy.

"You lie," Plow panted. "It must be a lie. It's because you say she's your *fiancée* that I know it

can't be true. Keep still, and I won't choke you, but if you move or try to speak I can't answer for myself. I'm going to tell you something I didn't come here to tell, but we had better understand each other once for all. That night on the road, when you almost trampled me down under your horse's feet, do you know why I never answered you a word? It was because I knew that if I once began to tell you what I thought of you I should end by dragging you from your horse. But you thought I was afraid, and you laughed as you rode away. There, I'll not strike you. You've nothing to fear from me but the truth, and now that you've heard it I'm satisfied."

"But I'm not," Babington gasped. "You'll hear from me later, in the courts."

Plow laughed.

"You'll think better of it. I guess you won't take it into the courts. But I'm tired bandying words." He reached for his hat and umbrella. Babington stood leaning on the back of a chair, like one deadly sick. The governor-elect gave him a last contemptuous look. A picture flashed into his mind—an insolent man on horseback—and he laughed again. Then he strode out of the room and slammed the door behind him.

CHAPTER XXX

THE PROSPERITY OF A JEST

When Babington recovered from the shock of his personal humiliation at Plow's hands his first sensation was one of concern for his physical condition. As he poured out a liberal draft of whiskey he resolved that it should be his last for a long time to come. The instinct of self-preservation was aroused within him. He knew that his muscles were soft, his nerves unsteady, and his breathing quick. A feeling of self-pity crept over him as he recalled his former prowess on the athletic field. Like Milo of Crotona in the days of his decline, he could almost have wept at the discovery that his arms were dead. But, unlike the Greek athlete, he was not without hope. It was high living, not age, that had weakened him. He would go into training once more. He experienced a twinge of jealousy to think of his enemy's splendid condition. And once the odds had been the other way.

Plow's last words were true. Babington did think better of bringing the affair into court. There were no witnesses to the scene, and one man's word was as good as another's. He would tell no one. If his sister had heard the altercation she would have run

to the rescue, but she was busy with her household cares at that hour, and evidently no sound from the study had penetrated through the heavy doors and iron-ribbed floors of the large house.

The situation was not materially changed by the visit. Their mutual hatred was merely intensified. Babington felt that he had given as much as he received. He had stood up and told the fellow to his face that he was a villain; and he felt that his lie in regard to Mrs. Van Sant had struck home. He laughed with savage triumph to remember that a great part of Plow's wrath was the agony of a disappointed man.

He went into his dressing-room and changed his rumpled collar before the mirror. The faint marks of Plow's fingers aroused his fury anew, and he resolved to lay him by the heels yet, even if it cost him half his fortune. His fortune! He smiled to think how soon he had become accustomed to the sense of possession, and then realized that his good fortune was not so unexpected, after all. He had reckoned upon possession for some days; but possession with personal liberty was the unexpected thing. He had waked forever from the nightmare thought of a marriage with Mrs. Tupper. He went downstairs, his good spirits restored, and ran into his sister's outstretched arms.

"Why didn't you tell me, Henry?" she cried reproachfully. "If it hadn't been for Mrs. Bork I might not have learned it this morning."

"What an advantage to have a dressmaker who reads the papers before she begins her daily labors,"

he answered. "This will teach you to keep up with the times. The day should always begin with the newspaper." He extricated himself from her embrace and reached for his hat.

"Don't go yet," she entreated. "Stay and talk with me a while. What will you do with so much money?" He saw that she was weighed down by a sense of responsibility.

"Already troubled by conscientious scruples?" he queried good naturedly. "I'll do much as I'm doing now, I fancy, only more so. But I haven't got it yet. There will be the usual legal delay, though I can raise what I want on my expectations."

"Mrs. Bork told me such an interesting thing," she interposed, as she saw his hand on the door. He turned and waited impatiently. "She said Mrs. Van Sant was related to the Tuppers—"

"What!" he cried.

—"And was entitled to some of the money. Mrs. Bork stopped at Mrs. Van Sant's this morning on her way here, to make an engagement, and they talked about it. She asked Mrs. Van Sant whether she were going to put in a claim."

"And what did she say?" he demanded.

"She only laughed and said you could have her share. Wasn't that lovely of her?"

She asked the question with the insinuating timidity of a woman that has learned caution by repeated snubs. Her brother would never gratify her love of romance by confessing a partiality for any particular woman, and she had often thrown out hints in vain concerning Mrs. Van Sant. Nor was her inter-

est altogether romantic. The advent of a sister-in-law would probably mean the end of her own reign in the house, and for years she had schooled her unselfish soul to rejoice for her brother's sake in her own inevitable dethronement. Fluttering with complicated emotions, she searched his face for a confirmation of her hopes and fears.

A hundred little incidents came back to the president's mind. The relationship explained much; Mrs. Tupper's antagonism, which he had attributed solely to jealousy, their knowledge of each other's circumstances, Mrs. Van Sant's presence at the funeral. He felt that her refusal to claim her share was no mere jest and could be due to only one thing, her love for him. He realized that his long probation was at an end, and his pulses leaped. In the face of his sister's scrutiny he strove to keep the exultation from his voice.

"Lovely of her?" he echoed quizzically. "I don't know. Perhaps she didn't mean it. Perhaps she didn't choose to take her dressmaker into her confidence, the way some women do. She may claim her own yet."

His heart gave the lie to his suspicious answer, and he went out into the open air like one in a dream. He felt it was like Mrs. Van Sant to act as she did, and not unlike her to speak thus frankly with an old servant, on the impulse of the moment.

As if to confirm the resurgence of his mood, the sun began to break through the clouds in thin, pale shafts of light. By the time he reached the campus the sky was almost clear. It was like that autumn

morning the day after his inauguration, more than two years before. There was the same stimulating suggestion of the coming winter, the same sparkle of rain-drops on the beaten leaves, the same sound of ringing bells, the same moving picture of student life. But now the classic pillars of Tupper Hall looked down on the campus where no hall had been before, and the clang of the workmen's hammers came like music to his ears through the open windows.

He remembered that the two hundred thousand dollars which Mrs. Tupper had first given to the university would now become available for other buildings or new professorships, and he carried his head higher at the thought. He was conscious of the fact that his good fortune invested him with a new interest in the eyes of all who saw him. The delusion that none could know of the old woman's infatuation for him was an additional comfort. The difference in their ages would make the legacy seem like a gift to an adopted son. Even had he known that many a sharp gossip guessed the truth he would not have been greatly concerned. Gossip was one thing, proof another, and the power of money was very real.

Before he reached his office he had been congratulated more than once by passing professors, but Everett spoke to him a few moments upon a question of administration and went on without mentioning the subject. He glared after the professor with a sense of having been affronted by a school-

master. Perhaps the man thought he would be the next president of the university, he reflected.

All day long, as he sat in his office and performed his accustomed duties, he was conscious of a curious duality. One part of him dictated letters, interviewed professors, attended to innumerable details of the university routine; the other part was detached, expectant, exalted. He seemed to be doing the work of some one else, while his own hopes and interests lay beyond those walls. He pictured Mrs. Van Sant the mistress of his house, and glowed with pride to imagine the figure she would make as the wife of the president of the university. In the summer they would go east together; everywhere she would win him friends and favor by her charm and tact.

These were the hopes and calculations of the president's nimble mind when the pauses between his tasks gave time for their upbuilding, and their selfishness was touched by ideality. His cultivated senses appreciated her quality to the full, and he gave her all the love, he invested her with all the romance, of which his nature was capable. It was true that this romance would have been impossible had her circumstances been less easy, her environment less charming. It was dependent on the very furniture and pictures of her house, the service of her table, the manners of her servants, the gowns and hats she wore, the paper on which she wrote him an occasional note. It was the lack of these things in his sister that vitiated the tone of his own house, in spite of all his efforts.

As evening came on he began to experience an emotion akin to that of a bridegroom who awaits the coming of his bride. In a little while he would be surrounded by the atmosphere he loved, an atmosphere of charm and delicacy and shaded lights. He would hear the rustle of her silken skirt, he would see the flash of her lovely arms, and the glory of her hair. She had kept him waiting long. She had made him suffer for his great mistake, but she had educated him in the diplomacy of love. She had made him realize the value of her favor, and had sweetened the cup of his final triumph till the very prospect of the draft went to his head like a rare and precious wine.

At last he found himself in her presence once more. Anticipation had melted into reality with the strange and easy magic of a dream.

"It can't be that I have just come," he said, glancing about the familiar room and back to her face with a whimsical smile. "I seem to have been here the livelong day, with you." It was long since he had ventured upon such personal grounds, but now the step was easy and inevitable.

"I can assure you that you haven't," she retorted brightly. "If you had been here this morning I'm sure that Ellen would have swept you into her dustpan, and as for myself, I spent the whole day in the capital, shopping. It must have been a dream."

He leaned forward, his eyes alight with the finest emotion of his life.

"It was a dream," he said softly. She started at

his tone and manner, but he possessed himself of her hand and held it delicately, warmly, in both his own.

"Listen," he commanded. "I must tell you now what I have been telling you mentally all this day. You must know the evolution you have worked in me; you must know my gratitude and love, even if you scorn them. I never cared much for women; I never even fancied myself seriously in love till I met you. Then I thought I knew what love was, but you knew that I did not. Was it not so? You knew I was not worthy; that the cares and ambitions of mature life had crowded out the ideals of my youth. You found an old poem of mine and used it as a touchstone, but there was no response. There was need of an awakening, of a baptism of fire, before I could present myself to you with a shadow of a claim to your regard. How little I understood the meaning of that incident the first evening I sat with you in this room! It has taken two long years to teach me the lesson, but I have learned it now. I have come to see that I dare not love you until I learn to love the things you love. Do you understand?"

What was there at that moment in her eyes, tender and bright with emotion as they were, that made the distance between them still impassable? He knew that he had touched her as never before, that she found him winning, that they fascinated each other as they had so often done, but now with an intensity that was full of momentous possibilities. She should have the full confession of his heart, and

he went on with a humility that was now his dearest pride.

"It needed only one thing more to prove my unworthiness and to strengthen my hope of forgiveness until I dared to speak. Only this morning I found out, by the merest accident, what I might have guessed long before, that you were entitled to a share of the fortune that has fallen so unexpectedly to my lot, and I dared to divine the reason you would not claim it."

He was about to continue, to ask her to share it with him, to outline all the glorious future of which he had dreamed so fondly that day, but she withdrew her hand and stood looking at him with such amazement that he paused in confusion.

"I don't understand what you mean," she said.

He saw that she was puzzled to know how he had learned of her intention. Somehow, he had almost imagined that she told the dressmaker on purpose, knowing it would travel to him.

"Mrs. Bork was talking with my sister—" he explained.

"Mrs. Bork!"

She would have laughed, but her sense of the ludicrous was overwhelmed in a wave of sudden anger, and she looked at him with eyes grown strangely cold. She would not tell him that her conversation with Mrs. Bork was a joke, that her distant relationship to the first Mrs. Tupper constituted no claim to part of the property. He had shattered the harmony between them forever by this false note, and her analysis of him was pitiless. Even if

her relationship did constitute a claim, it was not for him to divine why she did not choose to press it. She thought of Mrs. Tupper and all the sordid possibilities of her relationship with this man she might have loved. The thought of his devious dealings which she had condemned and excused alternately for so long a time stung her. And he might have been so different! It was a realization of how much she wished him to be different that worked like madness in her brain.

"You are mistaken, Mr. Babington," she said coldly, "in regard to my motives. I did not propose to claim my part of your fortune because I felt that you had earned it all."

The blood rushed to his face, as if she had struck him a blow. For a moment their eyes contended with an intense hostility that verged upon hatred. They had been so near to love that the quarrel could not be less than fatal. All the strange irritation which each had been able to arouse in the other at times was concentrated at that moment. He opened his mouth to speak, but could think of no justification, no explanation, that would not appear specious or undignified in the face of such a taunt. He searched her face to discover some possibility of a mistake, some sign of yielding, but found none.

She could have recalled him while he took his hat and coat in the hall, but she stood motionless until the street door closed behind him, and then sank into a chair. For a long time she stared into the fire, her hands locked in her lap, and listened to the ticking of the clock on the mantel. She was think-

ing that if they had been married, or even engaged, their relationship would have stood the strain of the quarrel, but now it was fatal. She was glad she had not called him back, for it was better that the strange fever should end. The possibility of love between them was gone forever, and now she realized that it had never really existed. A new, exhilarating sense of freedom and awakening stole over her, and she began to smile.

"To think," she mused, "that the thing which decided my fate was just a flash of my awful temper!"

She arose and pushed the chairs about, laughing lightly, nervously, with a growing appreciation of the fact that her besetting sin had given her the key of the fields. She felt that she could not stay within doors. The scene through which she had passed left her feverish, longing for action and freedom and the open air. Without any definite idea as to her destination she put on her wraps and left the house.

The November night was cool and clear and dark. She looked up at the Milky Way, a long streak of gold dust flung across the zenith of the sky, and felt that she had never before realized the joy of being alone. For once she was not awed nor depressed by the solemnity of nature, but rather calmed and refreshed. It was still early in the evening, and as she reached the main street she saw a crowd of people entering the car that was bound for the capital. She did not remember that she had taken her purse with her, but she noticed now that it was in her hand. Yielding to a sudden impulse she stepped aboard the car and sank into a seat by

the door, still absorbed in her reflections. Presently she began to notice that in all that crowded car there were very few whom she knew. It was not the set that went to the capital for the theater or opera. She heard them speaking of Plow, and learned that this was the night of the formal celebration of his election. Then she remembered that she had seen the signs of preparation that morning on her shopping expedition, and resolved that she would watch the parade.

The main street of the capital was already congested with a countless multitude of people, and the police were busily engaged in clearing a lane for the columns that were momently expected. She had scarcely been pushed up to the curb when a distant sound of music came to her ears. Then the head of the procession turned a corner some blocks below, with a simultaneous burst of sound and light. The colored fires flashed along the fronts of the buildings, and the brazen blare of trombones and cornets bore down on her. Louder and louder the volume of sound reverberated against the long rows of shimmering windows. The feet of the crowd kept time to the march; the pavement thrilled with the booming of the great drum; even the stars, dim and spectral above that narrow gorge of tumultuous life, seemed to quiver and shake to the sound of the bugles.

Tramping along in the wake of the band came a company of working men in swaying, uneven ranks, their caps ornamented with little flags. Somehow the warlike music had so stirred Mrs. Van Sant's

imagination for the moment that she half expected to see a regiment of soldiers, straight lines of bright uniforms and gleaming bayonets, and her heart misgave her strangely at sight of that dingy rabble. They marched as they had come from the shop or the field, with little attempt at keeping the line, smoking their pipes, talking, laughing, or solemn with a sense of their triumph. To one of her experience with public pageants it seemed a sorry army, especially in connection with the triumphant pæan by which it was heralded. There were men of all ages, from the graybeard to the boy, but all were alike in a certain pallor of countenance and a suggestion of hard usage. For the first time she realized the true nature of Plow's constituents. These were the men that mended the streets, that moved her furniture or plastered her house, that passed her at evening with sooty faces. She tugged nervously at her glove, conscious of being mortified for his sake.

She began to grow weary, when she realized that the procession had only begun. As rank after rank swung by, a conception of the people's power dawned upon her. The learned might theorize, the bosses plot, the rich despise, but the people, when they chose, could sweep all these aside like straws and have their will. She began to be ashamed of her shame.

Suddenly the piccolo and fife cut the air with the shrill notes of Yankee Doodle, and she smiled with a peculiar pride and understanding. A picture out of her school history flashed into her mind; an old

man beating a drum, his white hair flying in the wind, marching into battle between his son and grandson, who were playing the fife on either side. She thought it must have been at the battle of Bennington, and remembered Molly Stark, who would have been a widow had the day been lost.

"I always begin to feel wildly patriotic when I hear Yankee Doodle on the fife," she murmured to herself. "I want to skip like rams, the way the mountains do in the Psalms."

She had an appreciation of something absurd and homely, yet splendid and heroic. The common people never stirred her scorn; she was too genuine an aristocrat for that. It was the pretenders in her own station that irritated her. The people in the mass were to be reckoned with, and ruled for their own good. The presence of the flag everywhere in the procession attracted her attention, and she began to see that this was the workers' revolutionary war. A dray passed by, filled with young children, and over their heads she read the sentence: *When we are men we will do as our fathers did.* For the first time she realized that this was the battle of her generation, confused and inchoate as yet, but rolling on to great and definite ends. Already its leaders were coming forth. She remembered Plow's hopeful words when her heart had been incredulous and hard, and felt now that he was right. He seemed to belong to the Lincoln type of statesman, a man destined to be one of the heroes of the new industrial order. In her present mood Babington's pretentions seemed almost pitiful compared with his rival's

deeper purpose, and she watched for Plow's appearance with a heightened interest that was becoming almost breathless.

The faces along the sidewalk, the clustered heads at the windows, lighted up by intermittent bursts of colored fire, were turned expectantly in one direction. A cheer arose far down the street and rolled between the inclosing walls. He was coming at last. The various unions, each with its own banner and float, had been filing by interminably, until the spectators had lost the weary count. By a common impulse the great crowd surged forward.

An immense cone of wheat and corn, wreathed in ribbons and surrounded by allegorical figures, came tottering along on its huge float, but no one paid attention to it now. Then was heard the ring of iron against iron, the men of the Blacksmiths' Union beating their anvil chorus. No horses in the procession seemed to move so proudly as those which drew that dray, and no other company stepped along with such a firm and swinging stride, for they were Plow's own comrades, the men from whose ranks he had sprung. They cheered continually, waving their hats and shouting their hero's name. The enthusiasm was infectious and the cry was taken up by thousands.

The red lights blazed once more and showed him in his carriage, calm, exalted, bare-headed, bowing from side to side with his pleased and kindly smile. He appeared a giant compared with the men that sat beside him, and the people felt that he was their Saul, destined to break the yoke of the Philistines.

Mrs. Van Sant was touched by his dignity, his exaltation, his great simplicity and goodness. Even now, when she saw that he had won what many a man she thought more clever could not win, it was these qualities that impressed her most. She saw the absurd bouquet of pink roses, tied with long pink ribbons, which some of his admirers had thrust into his hands, and was amused to think of roses in connection with Professor Plow.

Suddenly, from somewhere behind her, a group of students gave the university cheer, followed by Plow's name. He turned and smiled in the direction of the sound, with that friendly wave of the hand they knew so well. For one moment his eyes met those of the woman he loved, but he was carried past before she could be sure that he distinguished her from the crowd in which she stood. Presently she noticed that the procession was at an end, and that the cars were running once more. She was conscious of her temerity in coming so far from home alone and took a car for Argos almost in a panic. Never had rest been so grateful to her. Her capacity for emotion was gone, and she welcomed the oblivion of a dreamless sleep.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE LOST LEADER

There was much of the bully, but none of the bulldog, in President Babington's nature, and Mrs. Van Sant's taunt struck so deep that he went to his office the following morning a changed man. Having lost her, he felt for the time that he had lost all. The struggle against Plow no longer seemed worth while. The plan of buying the regents was too uncertain, too much fraught with the danger of discovery and scandal. Besides, his enemy had already guessed his intention and was forearmed.

And why, he asked himself, should he spend so much money to retain a position full of drudgery and friction? Why should he not pull up stakes and leave a place made distasteful to him by the scorn of the woman he loved and by the ingratitude of the institution he had served so well? As he heard the sound of the workmen's hammers from Tupper Hall and thought of all he had done for the university, he was moved to wonder at the thanklessness of the board of regents and the hatefulness of the faculty. He could not understand the antagonism which his hardness of heart, his selfishness, his snobbishness, had aroused in so many

breasts, because he did not know that he possessed those characteristics. His sophistries had made him his own most ardent admirer, and he felt that if the constituents of the university did not appreciate him the loss was theirs.

He did not love the place, and experienced no sadness at the possibility of breaking old ties. Rather, he was scornful of the big, overgrown, plebeian high school. He had never been loyal to the teaching profession, though it was his own. He had always shared the world's contempt for the pedagogue, and had felt inferior in the face of commercial success and social power. He told himself that he had tried to give the university tone, to bring in gentlemen and men of the world, but they preferred Everett and his kind, and the papers had rewarded him with lampoons.

Perhaps he might retain his position in spite of Plow by making large donations to the university, but at the thought of such a method of bribery he smiled scornfully. He had longed for wealth all his life, and he had no intention of throwing it away, now that his dream was realized. Why should he labor in that obscure western town, far from the nation's greatest culture and wealth? With Mrs. Van Sant as his wife, the game would have been delightful and full of interest; but now he sickened with mortification to remember his fool's paradise of yesterday. He had no thought of asking her to reconsider her decision, for his anger against her was greater than his pain at her loss. He hated her for her insult, and not once did he question the methods

by which he had won his fortune or his right to its possession. The fact of possession was the only thing he cared to contemplate.

His mind ran over the possibilities of the future, should he decide to resign. He remembered a classmate, now a senator at Washington and a friend of the president. Why should he not go to the capital of the nation to live? He had influence and wealth. He was master of French and German, he had been much abroad, and was fitted to represent his country as minister at Berlin, or Paris, or London. What was the presidency of a state university compared with such a position? He would look back upon it then as a stepping-stone by which he had risen to higher things. Plow would suffer political eclipse, Everett would sink under the burden of his office, but he would be too far removed even to care to rejoice greatly in their downfall.

With characteristic impulsiveness his decision was made. A sense of adventure stirred within him. He pushed the papers on his desk aside and leaned back in his chair with a feeling of extraordinary relief. He was free at last.

A few mornings later Lee walked into Judge Gates' office in the capital, holding a copy of *The Times* in his hand which contained the announcement of Babington's resignation from the presidency of the university, and of his own election to the position. He was somewhat breathless, and his face was pale.

"Is this a misprint, Judge," he asked, "or a practical joke? Surely, Everett was meant."

The regent swung round in his chair and looked at his *protégé* as affectionately as he ever looked at a human being.

"I admire your gratitude, young man," he said. "I reserve my practical jokes for my enemies. Have you got any complaint coming?"

"Everybody supposed that Plow had booked Everett for the place, when we heard the rumor of Babington's resignation," Lee explained. "I haven't got my bearings yet. I dropped everything and came right over to see about it."

"Don't you worry about Plow and Everett," the judge answered with his dry smile. "Plow's satisfied; I saw to that. You stood up for him, and he didn't forget it. Of course, I'm sorry for Everett, but it can't be helped. He ought to have been made president ten years ago, perhaps, but not now. This is the age of young men. The position would kill Everett in a year or two, but you take things more easily. You have a sense of humor, you don't give a damn for the applause or caterwauling of the gallery, and you understand the ropes thoroughly. In a word, you'll do, so I don't want another word from you."

"Not even of thanks?" Lee asked, smiling.

The judge took his outstretched hand with a certain ceremonious manner which made Lee feel that he had been admitted to a new footing with the old politician unknown before.

"Sit down," he said, "I want to talk this thing over with you a little. I know you better than you know yourself. You'll rise to this position as easily as you rose to your professorship, and you won't suffer from growing pains, either." He leaned back in his chair and chuckled. "I wish you could have been present at the meeting of the board. Babington didn't come; he sent his resignation by a messenger. I was elected chairman, and began operations by insisting upon its immediate acceptance."

"Were they reluctant?" Lee asked.

"Well, yes, at first. They had an idea he would give the university some of the money he cozened that old woman out of, but I knew better. I told them that if they would accept the resignation and put in my man I'd give the university five hundred thousand dollars to-morrow; but if they wouldn't I'd resign from the board and wash my hands of the whole business. So the thing was done."

For a few moments Lee was too much amazed to speak. He did not doubt his ability to make an acceptable president, but he did not like to think that his election was purchased. In fact, the transaction looked like bribery, pure and simple. He was not unacquainted with the ethics of men like Judge Gates and the late Lemuel Tupper. For one moment he wavered. Ought he to accept? With all his fine scorn of the power of money, it was money that had purchased him the opportunity of his life. As he looked at the satisfied and triumphant face of the old man opposite him he felt the impossibility of refusing. Such an attitude would seem quixotic

and self-righteous. There were good arguments on both sides of the question, but he did not stop to weigh them then.

"Are you sure you will be satisfied with your bargain?" he asked.

"I'm a pretty shrewd judge of values," the regent returned. "Nobody cozened me out of it. I had been thinking of doing something of the kind for a long time. I haven't got anybody I care to leave my money to, and I can't expect to last much longer."

Lee knew that the disease which had driven the judge to Europe was incurable. His heart contracted with pity, but the regent was not a man whom one could commiserate. He was like an old eagle dying by inches, his cold undaunted eyes fixed haughtily upon the passing world.

"I'm an old bottle," he continued, "and you can't fill me up with new wine." His leathern face wrinkled in a smile of sardonic humor. "Perhaps it's because I put too much old wine into myself when I was a new bottle, but I don't complain. I never kicked at the price I had to pay for anything I wanted." As they shook hands again at parting, he looked up with a sudden thought.

"I needn't tell you that you are the president of the university, not I. Of course, people will talk, but they'll soon find out that you are running the thing yourself. You don't owe me anything, you understand."

Lee knew the judge too well to question the sincerity of his declaration. He realized for the first

time the responsibility that was thrown on him and he straightened instinctively. One could see in imagination how the years would deal with him, mellowing and strengthening him until he fulfilled the promise of his brilliant and audacious youth. Some such thought passed through the old man's mind, and he smiled.

"You look the president already, Nicholas," he said proudly. "Your father would have been pleased with this. Good by, and good luck to you."

Lee was almost too deeply moved to speak his appreciation. As he looked back and saw the judge smiling at him from the door he was doubly glad that he had not wounded him by questioning his methods.

When he entered the campus an hour later he was congratulated by passing colleagues, and a secret amusement stirred within him at a realization of the glamour of position. He was not unconscious of it in himself, and he was decidedly conscious of it in others. He had never been blinded by any man's office to his weaknesses and faults as a man, and he expected judgment only on his merits. Yet there was something in the office itself that he had not divined,—a certain new attitude of mind, an inspiration, a larger, more impersonal point of view. If office could not make an insignificant man impressive, it could certainly give great opportunities to one who deserved them.

A crowd of students cheered him as he passed up the steps on his way to Babington's room. He was the first alumnus of the university to become its

president and his election appealed to the patriotism of the undergraduates.

Babington rose from his chair and shook his hand affably.

"I congratulate you and the university, Mr. Lee," he said. "The board has made no mistake."

"Thank you," Lee replied. "You treated us to a surprise and the board treated me to one. I expect to wobble in your shoes."

In reality he hoped to fill the presidential shoes snugly, and he smiled at the almost imperceptible expansion of the chest with which Babington received his conventional compliment. He had never known the man's manner to be quite so patronizing as at the present moment. He reached slowly for his silk hat and fitted it nicely on his head. Then he stood drawing on his gloves, his cane under his arm, his round eyes fixed in a speculative stare on his successor. He was wondering whether he were looking at the future husband of Mrs. Van Sant.

"No one understands the machinery of the university better than yourself, Mr. Lee," he said, "and Mr. Watkins can tell you where to lay your hand on anything you want. My business in the east is urgent, so I will bid you good by and wish you success now."

Lee could not fail to see his evident intimation that his business in the east was much more important than the occupation he was just leaving. As they shook hands he noticed that Babington had already put on his glove. It was a small point of discourtesy, but Lee believed it to be intentional.

He was not disposed to bandy more compliments and did not return the good wishes.

Babington was passing from the room when he caught sight of Watkins standing forlornly apart, and he paused to bid him farewell.

"I'm not sure that I shall let Mr. Lee keep you," he said distinctly. "I may have need of your services in Washington; so we will call it *au revoir* instead of good by."

"Thank you, sir," Watkins stammered. "I should like nothing better." He stood looking after his patron's retreating figure, his brown eyes dim with tears. To him Babington was a great man, and his service had been a labor of love.

"Mr. Watkins," said Lee, as soon as they were alone, "I want you to feel that your present position is secure as long as you wish to keep it, but if something better presents itself you must consult your own interests. There isn't much of a future in a private secretaryship of this kind, and perhaps you will decide to go on with your graduate studies. But we will discuss that question later."

He sat down in the chair his predecessor had just left. The strain of the morning had been greater than he imagined, and he was glad to rest. He felt that he had lived a long life in a few short hours. As he glanced from the window he saw Babington descend the steps and enter his carriage, apparently oblivious of the lounging students, who greeted his departure with silence and an interchange of significant smiles. The new president wondered whether they felt that their hero had deserted them, whether

the scales had fallen from their eyes, whether they knew now how much weight to attach to all those fine phrases illustrating the superiority of the right to the expedient.

"Another lost leader," he murmured, adjusting his glasses. "Another idol with clay feet."

He watched Babington settle himself pompously on the cushions. The coachman cracked his whip. There was a rattle of harness, a whirl of wheels, and soon the ex-president's silk hat and broad shoulders disappeared below the brow of the hill.

For some time Lee sat alone, conscious of the interest and excitement on the campus outside. It was now noon, and the walks were thronged with students and professors coming from the classrooms. He knew that he was almost the sole subject of conversation, and he knew his world too well to suppose that all the comment was favorable. Many difficulties confronted him. He thought of the new professors, Babington's henchmen, who would be suspicious of his attitude. He had no intention of discharging them, but he resolved to bring back those men whom his predecessor's course of action had exiled. Judge Gates' donation or the Tupper fund would provide for that, and for an increase in the salaries of the instructors. He believed that the judge would let him have his will in this matter, for the regent had never favored the policy of cheapening men by cheap rewards. The thought of Professor Everett was more disquieting. How would he bear this second and final frustration of his just and honorable ambition?

It must have been bitter to see the prize of office given to a stranger; how much more bitter now to see it purchased for one of his old students? Lee realized that the professor really deserved the honor; but he could not transfer it to him, even if he would. Judge Gates had spoken the truth; the injustice was one of long standing, and was now irreparable. Everett's day was past. That kindly gray face rose up before him almost reproachfully, but he knew the man too well to fear his enmity. It was Mrs. Everett who would find it more difficult to forgive his success.

Suddenly another thought smote him with a thrill of pain and loss. Somewhere on that crowded walk was the girl he would never see in the class-room again. His position had raised up the final barrier between himself and her. He would never again sit at his desk, conscious of that sweet face by the window which had become inexpressibly dear to him. Of late, the lectures from which she was absent had seemed listless and uninspired. Why had she elected a course with him this second time? Was she impersonally interested in the subject, or did she come because the subject was his? He wondered whether she would drift away from him forever in the cloud of misunderstanding and doubt that now lay between them.

CHAPTER XXXII

AT EIGHT TO-NIGHT

Mrs. Van Sant read in the papers that President Lee's formal inaugural address would be delivered in the gymnasium in a fortnight. He had already taken the oath of office and was president in fact, but the local love of speechmaking and of holiday occasions could not be denied. All the university constituents were on tiptoe to hear what he would say, and they felt delightfully sure that he would speak with no uncertain note. Already his acts were speaking for him. Mrs. Tupper's death and Judge Gates' donation had put the university in possession of seven hundred thousand dollars. It was announced that the interest of the Tupper fund would be used for the increase of salaries and for the support of retired professors. The exiled professors that had not found other positions were already on their way back to Argos. She read also the final fleers and skits which *The Times* flung after the departed president, like a handful of firecrackers to celebrate its victory.

All this university gossip was more or less interesting, but there was one name in the paper that stood out from the thousands of words with a per-

sonal and vital appeal to her imagination, the name of the governor-elect. She read what his plans were, or were thought to be, where he spoke and what he said, whom he had slated for this or that office, what laws he would advocate when the legislature should assemble, what corrupt practices, or steals, he would suppress.

As the days passed, and he seemed to forget her, she became restless and depressed. She was annoyed to discover that she stayed at home for fear of missing him, and scorned herself for the care with which she dressed in anticipation of the call he might never make. Out of the silence and waiting a deeper emotion was born, and she wished he could know that she understood him at last.

Sometimes she mockingly asked herself how much she was moved by his success, whether a vision of the state capitol, of the senate chamber at Washington, even of the White House, did not contribute to the romance with which she now invested him. She answered the question by frankly admitting that it was so. She had seen with her own eyes his power over the hearts of the people, and she knew the honors that were in their gift. She saw his qualities now in the light of his triumph. Had he failed, he would still seem the visionary reformer, but success had sublimated him and invested him with greatness.

She was far from apologizing to herself for this change of view. It was the right of every woman to judge among the rival aspirants for her hand and to choose the strongest if she would. She felt

that Plow had won her by his deeds, and that she ought to love him if he loved her still. Babington might charm her, but he could never appeal to her imagination again. If there had been something daring, something spectacular, in the winning of his fortune, she might have chosen him. Even if he had been a plunger on the stock exchange or a ruthless promoter, she might have forgotten to question his methods in admiration of his adventurous spirit. But, as it was, she was proud of her honest burst of temper.

How inadequate his charm seemed now! What was it that had held her? A trick of speech and dress, wholesome good looks, a feminine strain of finesse? Or was she attracted by spiritual possibilities which he might have realized? She wondered at herself in the light of her late revelation. She had known all along that he was more essentially vulgar than Plow, that he was a snob, while Plow was simply himself. She must have known that his ways were devious, and yet he had almost made her love him. And when she compared his rival again she confessed that she had obstinately resisted his greater attraction because his love was too deep for shallow flatteries, because his absorption in great ideas had made him oblivious of small refinements. She laughed at herself as she allowed her fancy to run on. Here was a man that loved her, whom she might love; she could add grace to his greatness.

At last she wrote him a little note in which she asked whether he intended to call some time and give her an opportunity to congratulate him upon

his election. After the letter was gone her peace of mind made her realize how she trusted him. She would never have dared to make such an advance to Babington under similar circumstances.

When Plow returned to his hotel the next afternoon, after an absence of a few days, he stood by the register for some time, holding the batch of letters the clerk had given him, and conversing with a little band of reporters and political friends. If Mrs. Van Sant had seen him then she would have realized that a great deal of her concern for his lack of grace was gratuitous. If victory had given her a new idea of him, it had also given him a new idea of himself, and he was changed. It was the same difference that had disconcerted the president at their meeting the morning after the election. He was the governor-elect, the man of the future. Neither he nor the men about him were oblivious of this fact, and yet there was no suggestion of pomposity in his bearing.

He gave an epigram to the reporters, and they went into gales of laughter as they caught the whimsical gleam of his eyes. For each of the friends who had helped him to perfect his political organization, his captains of hundreds and of thousands, he had a personal word. They were proud when he addressed them by their given names, but he was always Mr. Plow to them when he met them face to face, however much they might indulge in the affectionate nicknames of "old Dan," or "the professor," behind his back. There was not one of them who would not go to the stake to keep him in

the position they had worked so hard to place him in.

As he talked with them he looked over his letters casually, contriving with the skill of a politician to do two things at once without seeming to do so. The little note was lost between the larger envelopes and slipped to the floor unnoticed. One of the reporters recovered it and handed it to him with the quick intuition of his kind in regard to its peculiar significance. He was gratified when he saw the great man start and lose the thread of his remarks. Perhaps there was a story in that incident for some future time.

When safe in his room at last, Plow's first impulse was to tear the envelope open at once, but, on second thought, he cut the edge carefully with his penknife to mar as little as possible the paper her hands had touched. He sat for a long time holding the delicate missive in his large hands, and a mist gathered in his eyes, so that the letters grew fantastic and blurred. He lived over again the summer of struggle during which he had not seen her face and had scarcely dared to hope that her love would crown his triumph. But this letter must mean at least one thing. Whether she loved him or not, he knew that she did not love his rival. She could not be so cruel as to call him back in vain. As this conviction took possession of him he sprang to his feet, resolved to see her that night. Partly because he had so much to say that a letter was inadequate, partly because of the sudden surge of his spirits, he sent her a telegram. It was like a joyous shout

across the silence that had lain so long between them.

Mrs. Van Sant was sitting at dinner with Robert when the telegram came. As she tore open the envelope her thought was of Babington. She feared he might have done something desperate. But she laughed until the tears came into her eyes when she read the simple message: *Coming at eight to-night. D. P.* Did she not know the two men yet? It was absurd beyond belief.

Robert glanced at her in calm surprise, and she handed over the slip of yellow paper, moved by an impulse to confide, even in him. He gave her a curious smile.

"Sorry I sha'n't be here to greet him," he remarked dryly, "but I have an engagement."

"Robert," she retorted, "you could develop a certain kind of wit if you tried."

In her own room she debated with herself a long time in regard to the dress she should wear. She smiled to remember that it made no difference, for her visitor would not observe it; and then she felt a sudden impulse to weep at the thought that he would love her just the same, even if she came to meet him in a calico gown at the door of a cottage.

It was after eight o'clock when she looked at her reflection in the mirror for the last time. Even the man that was waiting downstairs must appreciate, though unconsciously, the effect of her brilliant color and fair skin against the black lace. It gave her a little throb of regret to reflect that Babington

had never seen her in that gown. He would have found her irresistible in it.

She knew his plans and ambitions. He had often spoken of the fascination of the diplomatic career, and she felt that he was clever enough to succeed. She might meet him again some time, in Washington, as the wife of Senator Plow, and she was sure that the sight of her would revive the old longing in his heart. He would never cease to be attracted by her, no matter whom he might marry. She knew this as well as she knew her own beauty, and she knew also that she would enjoy his torment to the full.

With an instinctive desire to postpone the scene that awaited her, she threw open her window, and stood looking at the moonlit night. She felt that her face was flushed and her pulse feverish. That very afternoon she had listened to Lee's inaugural address in the gymnasium. He had more than realized her expectations, and she had been proud of him, but she did not regret her rejection of his love. She felt that there was more sheer power in the man whose triumph she had witnessed in the capital, and a more absolute devotion in his heart than Lee could ever have given her. As she looked up at the white disk of the clock in the library tower she realized the permanence of the institution compared with the brief tenure of the individual. The chimes, striking the quarter-hour, seemed to ring out a calm, impersonal welcome and farewell. But solemnity could never dwell long in her heart. She reflected

with a sense of amusement that she could have been the wife of the president of the university, or of a millionaire diplomat, and that she would probably become the wife of the governor of the state.

When at last she stood at the threshold of the drawing-room and saw Plow's great square figure rise to greet her, a sudden faintness made her pause. She stood a moment, her hands grasping the dark curtains on each side, a brilliant picture against the dark background. She saw the light leap into his eyes, and felt that he did appreciate the gown after all. Then she swept forward with her most charming smile.

"You're looking very well after your campaign," she said. "I should think you would be a perfect wreck, but I remember you once told me you enjoyed it."

She endeavored to withdraw her hand from his grasp and to sink into a chair, but the effort was unavailing.

"No, no," he cried in a kind of agony of protest, "I can't let you go yet. I can't sit here and talk of other things when I care for only one."

She saw that he would deny her all the delicate approaches a woman loves, but she could not resist the passion of his appeal. Her heart was touched by his suffering so that she almost forgot to think of herself, and she smiled with a suggestion of surrender that gave him hope.

"When I left you with him that night," he went on, "I felt that your kindness was the kindness of pity. You were sorry that I had been so awkward

as to break the vase, but that wasn't all. You wanted me to understand that you were sorry you couldn't love me." His bright eyes searched her upturned face in questioning. "I knew it," he continued, his voice deepening with unconscious pathos, "and yet I couldn't believe it true. There was something in your eyes, something in the tone of your voice, that gave me hope. I staked everything on that campaign. You know how I love the things I fought for, and yet it was for you, more than for them, that I was fighting. It was the thought of you that made it possible and gave a kind of glory to it all. It was you who made me win."

"Are you quite sure," she asked softly, "that I deserve as much credit as that?"

"Yes," he answered, "it was you; it must have been you. I found I could move men as I had never moved them before. The power grew up in me, like something not myself, something I only held in keeping, something you had given me. That is what I wanted to tell you to-night. I dared to think you could not have called me back in vain, that you could not be so cruel. I dared to hope that you loved me." Something in her eyes made him pause. "You do!" he cried. "At last!"

He lifted her masterfully in his strong arms as if she were a child and kissed her again and again with a passion she no longer cared to resist. Then she was sitting beside him, expostulating when it was too late, a sense of ruffled dignity contending with a strange happiness of which she had not dreamed.

As she looked up at his face and realized all the suffering she had caused him, a wave of contrition smote her heart. Even if she told him how mistaken he was in his estimate of her he would not believe it. It was for her to prove to herself in the years to come that his estimate was right. At the thought, she rose to her feet, placed her hands on his shoulders, and kissed him.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE FALL OF THE CURTAIN

As Lee looked down on the familiar scene before him on the day of his inaugural address he caught sight of Mrs. Van Sant in the audience. Her presence seemed to transport him to the old high school in the capital, to the day when she had lost the debate against him. The great multitude that filled the floor of the gymnasium was no longer formidable, and that humorous memory stilled the turmoil of his mind, as a powerful precipitant clears the contents of a glass beaker. He could never be verbose and grandiloquent with those clear, discerning eyes upon him, and he knew that no one would be more pleased than she if he did well.

His smile in response to the applause that greeted his rising was touched with the same suggestion of irony that had characterized it when the students cheered him in the class-room for his opposition to his predecessor. He did not regard himself as a great man; he was not carried away by an enthusiasm he understood so well.

Clearly, logically, dispassionately, he outlined the policy he hoped to pursue. He spoke of Judge Gates' gift with simple appreciation and told the

uses to which it would be put. As he went on, almost carelessly it seemed, in his conversational manner, the contrast with his predecessor became more and more apparent. He stood like a gentleman at ease in the presence of his friends, serious but not portentous, humorous without flippancy.

The first sensation of disappointment died away as his personality began to make itself felt. He indulged in no fervid appeals, but the quality of his remarks gained slowly upon his hearers until he held them by every word. They began to watch for that quick smile, for the turn of the head that showed his salient profile a moment against the background of trailing flags. His enemies were disconcerted as they saw the ground for their complaint slipping from beneath their feet, and his friends knew that he had found himself at last. They no longer felt any need to apologize for the youthfulness that appeared now merely as equipoise and power.

The constituents of the university began to realize his lack of effort, his freedom from pretense, and an impression of his staying power took possession of them. This was not a man that would wear himself out with friction and anxiety. He had struck at once the note he could hold to the end. Ten, twenty, thirty years in the future he would speak in that same clear-cut and winning fashion, only still more wisely and well; there would still be that indefinable suggestion of youthfulness, the youthfulness of a mind unconscious of effort or

fatigue. It was this impression of intellectual sanity which the great throng carried away.

But his triumph, great as it seemed to others, left him unsatisfied. He had grasped the secret of success with comparative ease, but the happiness that alone could make it complete was more elusive. That evening, obeying an impulse that had become a habit, he went to see Mrs. Van Sant. The air was full of the mild witchery of the Indian summer, and as he caught sight of the moon beginning to lift a pale rim above the eastern horizon a longing stole into his heart which he felt she could not satisfy. Why should he go to see her to-night, when he needed something deeper than mere friendship could give? It broke in upon him like a revelation that he loved June Hathaway and must see her. He went by Mrs. Van Sant's house without even a passing glance and continued his way, stirred by a sudden resolve.

He that could have married so well from a worldly point of view, that had been spoiled by attention, now doubted the success of his venture and grew faint at the prospect of asking a poor girl to become the wife of the president of the university. Yet it was a fittingly unconventional sequel, he mused, to their unconventional story. She had never even invited him to call, and he realized how little he knew of her, how little he cared to know. He trusted his own intuition and experience too much to doubt her quality. His heart contracted with pity to imagine her life in that house. He supposed that she intended to teach school after get-

ting her degree. Most of the girls that worked their way through college did so with that end in view. She was not fitted for a life of drudgery, and he resolved that he would save her from it if he could. He was conscious of the sensation his appearance in that house would cause. It might be awkward for them both, and he turned over in his mind some scheme by which he could induce her to take a walk.

At the very gate he paused to mature this plan, when the door of the house opened and he saw her coming down the steps alone. The spectral moon was now well above the horizon, pouring a dim light down the street. She started at sight of the tall figure that confronted her, and then stood motionless before him, like a spiritual presence conjured into existence by his own longing. Her head was bare, and he saw her dark, abundant hair rippling in the breeze about her lovely head. Her eyes looked up into his, startled and wide. He raised his hat and greeted her quietly.

"Mrs. Clay is not at home," she said, breathing quickly. "I will tell her you called."

"I didn't call to see Mrs. Clay," he explained. "I called to see you."

"Me!" she echoed doubtfully. For a moment she hesitated, and he did not know whether she meant to flee or to go back with him into the house. Her unexpected appearance, the wild, dim beauty of the night, so touched his fancy that he half expected her to vanish. Suddenly he reached forward and swung the gate wide open.

"You were going somewhere to study, perhaps," he said with his winning smile. "You couldn't postpone it, could you, perhaps let it go, for this one evening? I have wished to see you very much."

"I could," she answered slowly. Then, as if conscious that her emphasis on the last word must appear ungracious, she added quickly, "Won't you come in?"

"Not on a night like this," he protested. "Let us walk a little while. This is the Indian summer; we can't expect it to last much longer."

He saw her distress, and did not wonder that she misunderstood him.

"You can trust me this time, Miss Hathaway," he said frankly. "I beg you to believe me, even if I don't deserve it."

He was touched by her gracious acquiescence. She was too gentle, too well bred, to doubt his word.

"Where shall we go?" she asked. "It really is a relief to be outdoors to-night."

"'Over the hills and far away,'" he answered. "Do you feel equal to such a walk as that?"

"I feel equal to anything," she returned.

They went up the street together, following their long, black shadows. Masses of crisp, dead leaves scurried past them, driven by a breeze as languorous as that of springtime. The bare branches of the trees wove swaying, fantastic patterns on the ground. The street was deserted, save for their presence, yet the night was filled with motion and sound, from the withered leaves that swept past like

whispering things to the dim stars that seemed to turn slowly with the turning world. It seemed to Lee that he was moving without conscious effort through a world unsubstantial and evanescent. The line of hills against the sky was unfamiliar, like a low mountain range in some half-forgotten Japanese picture, or the fabrication of a dream. He was subdued, almost sad. The practical, the intellectual, in his nature was lost in the mysticism which music and poetry and moonlight release from their prison in the inmost soul.

Suddenly he was speaking to her, almost as if his thoughts had begun to clothe themselves in words without his volition.

"You will wonder why I came to see you to-night, Miss Hathaway, but I couldn't keep from you any longer. You have been in my thoughts for days and weeks and months. At first I wanted to ask your forgiveness for kissing you that night in the snowstorm, and then I realized that I loved you."

She gave a startled cry, and they stood facing each other beneath the branches of a tree that threw a wierd tracery of shadow on her pale face. He took her hands in his own and continued almost breathlessly, his whole being warm with a glow of tender longing.

"I loved you that night, but I didn't know it. It was only when I realized that I should never see you in the class-room again that I knew the truth. That is the reason I came to see you to-night. I

wanted to tell you that I loved you and to ask you to be my wife."

He would have taken her in his arms, but she slipped from his embrace.

"No, no!" she gasped. "You mustn't. I'm—I'm engaged already!"

His amazement and disillusion were so great that he stood motionless and silent, like one suffering from a sudden physical shock. He did not know where to begin, how to extricate himself. It was almost too wonderful for belief. This simple and beautiful girl, whose love he had thought to pluck as he would pluck a rare rose, was so different from what he had supposed; and yet what right had he to suppose that he could have her for the mere asking? Why had he been so bewitched by her beauty as to misinterpret the glance of her eyes, the fact that she had elected his courses? His humiliation was even greater than his pain, but very little of his inward tumult was expressed in his words when at last he could find his voice.

"I have to ask your forgiveness a second time, Miss Hathaway," he said, "and to offer my good wishes also. I hope to have the pleasure—perhaps I already know—" He paused, struck by a sudden thought.

"It's Mr. Trumbull," she said, answering his unspoken question.

By mutual consent they began to retrace their steps.

"May I ask you one thing?" he demanded.

"Were you engaged when Mr. Trumbull left Argos?"

"No," she answered calmly, her emotion passed. "He wrote to me."

"He wrote to me also," he remarked, "and told me of his new professorship in the east, but he failed to mention his greater good fortune."

"It only happened to-day," she said demurely. "I thought I would tell you during our walk, but you didn't give me time."

"No," he said. "I was very much to blame. I hope you will forget that I was so inconsiderate." He talked to her of the university to which she was to go as Trumbull's wife, and said the things the occasion demanded, as if nothing had occurred between them. Then he left her where he had found her only a short half-hour before and walked rapidly away. He left Argos behind, crossed the railroad track and continued his way along the road into the bare and silent prairie. Suddenly he found himself laughing bitterly, lightly, at the thought of Trumbull's secretiveness. But why should he complain? Was not this exactly what he had wished and planned? Trumbull had chosen the wife he suggested, after all, and he admitted to himself that there was every prospect of happiness in the marriage. He himself was the only one to blame. He had been betrayed into folly by his love of poetry and beauty, and had learned one of life's bitter but wholesome lessons. He even admitted to himself that he was not sure he loved Miss Hathaway, and that his first judgment in re-

gard to her fitness for Trumbull was unerring. He had merely longed to possess a beautiful woman for her beauty, and that was all.

It was late when he passed Mrs. Van Sant's house once more and met Plow just coming out on the street. The governor-elect seized him by the hand with a grip that hurt and fairly rushed him along the sidewalk as he held his arm. Lee glanced at his face in wonder. He saw the glow of his strange eyes in the moonlight, and his heart failed him.

"You want to be congratulated," he said. "I've got my hand in to-night. It has become a habit with me. Let me wish you happiness."

Plow laughed outright, like a boy.

"It's a secret, Lee. Not a word, you understand, but give me your hand."

"Take my left one this time," Lee answered. "My right is already crippled, but I don't mind sacrificing the other."

When he left Plow at the car and turned back alone he felt that in this case, too, Nature had been wiser than he. He had never seen a man quite so happy and exultant as Plow, and knew that if Susanne had accepted him he could not have experienced an equal rapture. He began to feel that he was a benevolent spectator of other people's joy, a joy that was as yet beyond his own experience, but not beyond the possibilities of the future. And he realized that he was not at all broken-hearted, but strangely happy and serene.

He had his work in the world to do, and never

had it seemed more worth the doing. His thoughts reverted to the scene in the gymnasium that afternoon, and the old boyish love for his *alma mater* stirred in his soul with something of the compelling power of a splendid song. Whatever her shortcomings, the university seemed to him the mother of heroes, of statesmen, of scholars and poets. Here was preparing the leaven that would leaven the great commonwealth in the days to come, a work in which he would have a large part. And to him personally the place was home. In contrast to the noise and confusion of the capital where Plow must fight his battle, the little city seemed a haven of rest, with its scattered houses, its dark, cool spaces, the twinkling lights of the library on the hill, the stately tower, and the sweet notes of the chimes dropping slowly downward like a benediction through the quiet night.

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